PLAYBOY

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THE College ISSUE

THE INTERVIEW
LEE CHILD

What's with all these COLLEGE KIDS getting RICH in their dorm rooms?

the Girls of the BIG 10

Dax Shepard is REALLY f'ing funny!
Ha Ha

HARD KNOCKS
WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BRAIN AFTER FOOTBALL?
+ 2012 NFL PREVIEW

HOW TO LOOK GOOD NAKED

PLAYBOY'S TOP PARTY SCHOOLS
time to transfer?

Redemption of a Sneaker Pimp:
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Sonny Vaccaro comes clean

GET SMARTER:
Have a chat with STEPHEN HAWKING

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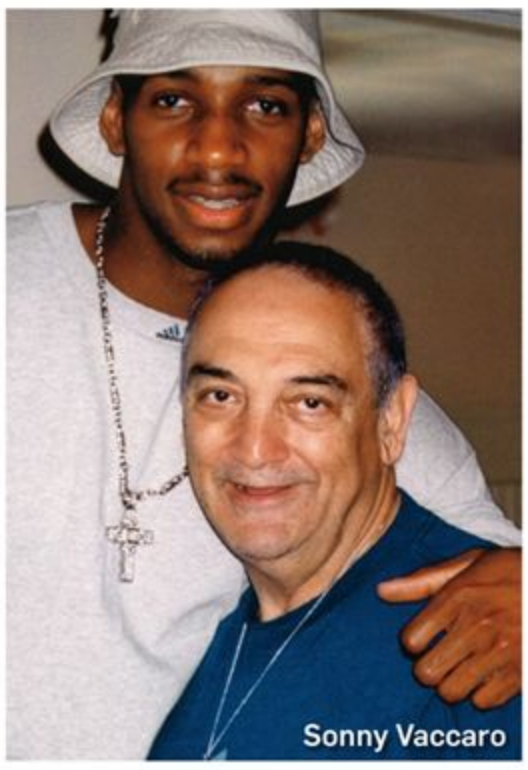
Fall has arrived, and with it comes our annual whizbang college issue. Inside you'll find our *Girls of the Big Ten* pictorial, our top party schools list and a wild story by **Don Peteroy** of the University of Cincinnati—our College Fiction Contest winner. In *Circuit Builders,* Peteroy takes us inside a rehab center where the patients can do as many drugs as they want. Yes, it's dark. As part of our *50 Years of the Playboy Interview* series, we bring you **Stephen Hawking,** the world's most influential scientist. He speaks candidly about his debilitating disease and his favorite subject, the universe. Artist **Pamela Horton**—otherwise known as Miss October 2012—is pictured at right paddling photographer **Sasha Eisenman,** who shot her for the cover. Swing away, Pamela! **Sonny Vaccaro** (pictured below right with NBA star Tracy McGrady) signed Michael Jordan to his first sneaker deal, back in 1984. From there, things went south for Vaccaro, who has been criticized through the years for turning college sports into a big business that takes advantage of student athletes. Can Vaccaro make amends with the sports world before it's too late? Find out in *The Redemption of a Sneaker Pimp.* For her latest *Women* column, "Forget Money—Get a Job With Sex Appeal," our furiously funny female **Lisa Lampanelli** riffs on how guys with cool jobs make women want to drop their panties. Attention, college students: If that doesn't motivate you to study hard and get yourself a good degree, nothing will. In this month's *Francofile,* "Talking With Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg," columnist **James Franco** talks with one of Hollywood's most powerful comedic writing teams. The pair worked together on *Superbad, Pineapple Express* and the forthcoming *The End of the World.* What else does autumn bring to mind? Football, of course. **Rick Gosselin,** one of the most respected journos covering the NFL today, picks the best and the worst for 2012. You'll never believe who he has winning it all. Bonus: Our look at violence in the NFL. Speaking of violence, thriller writer extraordinaire **Lee Child** has created one of the best fictional badasses in recent years: Jack Reacher, who has head butted his way through Child's 17 novels. In the *Playboy Interview,* Child speaks about the benefits of smoking weed, re-creating yourself after 40 (the age at which he wrote his first book) and having Jack Reacher brought to life on the big screen by Tom Cruise. Finally, **Dax Shepard** knocks our *20Q* out of the park this month. The actor manages to be brutally honest and funny about his past addictions, as well as his current one—speed (the pedal-to-the-metal kind). Now, are you ready for some action of your own? Go ahead: Start reading.

Don Peteroy

Stephen Hawking


Sonny Vaccaro

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Rick Gosselin

Pamela Horton with Sasha Eisenman

James Franco

Lee Child

Dax Shepard

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COVER STORY
Pamela Horton is a work of art, revealing her sporty side as our cover girl and artistic soul as October's Playmate. Is it any wonder our Rabbit was smitten with her charms?

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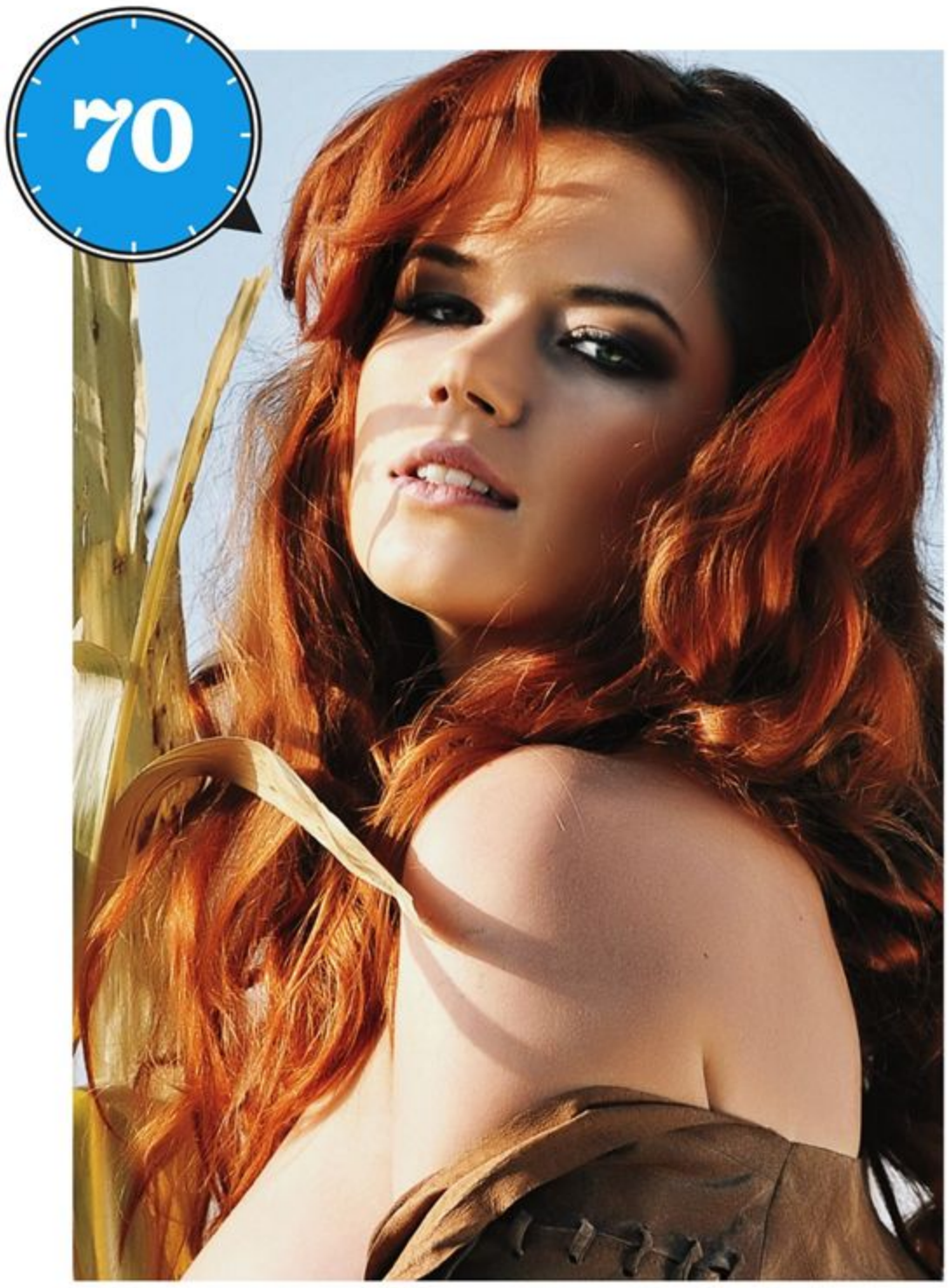

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A BLOODY GOOD PARTY

The vampire fangs and Bunny ears were out at the Playboy–*True Blood* party after Comic-Con. The cast of HBO's smash hit—including Stephen Moyer, Sam Trammell, Joe Manganiello, Michael McMillian, Alexander Skarsgård and Janina Gavankar—took a break from Fang-tasia to come to San Diego and revel with Playmates and such chic geeks as *Family Guy*'s Seth MacFarlane.

CANDY GIRL

Kendra Wilkinson dropped by the Playboy Mansion to show Hef her new line of romance products, Love Candy. "My relaxation and romance rituals are very important to me and Hank," Kendra says. "Now I'm ready to share them with the world." Inside the Love Candy boxes are lotions, massage oils, lickable body drizzle, sexy dice and a massager.

MCCARTHYISM

Almost 20 years after first appearing in PLAYBOY, 39-year-old sex symbol Jenny McCarthy graced our cover and an elegant and alluring spread. "Why should 20-year-olds be the only ones who are considered sexy?" Jenny asked at the Cîroc Cabana Club party in Chicago. "I'm proud of it," she said, "and I can't wait to maybe do it again when I'm 50."

KICKING IT

To kick off the week-end when top athletes descend on Los Ange-les, Playboy threw a pre-ESPYs party. Celebrities and ballers who attended the fete included *Men at Work*'s Adam Busch, DeSean Jackson of the Eagles, Oscar winner Jamie Foxx and the Browns' Trent Rich-ardson. The night played out like one glorious end zone celebration.

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HANGIN' WITH HEF

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM PARTY

Welcome to Hugh Hefner's annual lingerie and pajama party. **1.** Allie Mason and Pauly Shore. **2.** Cee Lo Green. **3.** Vivi Voss and Crispin Glover. **4.** Hef, Miss December 2009 Crystal Harris and Cooper Hefner. **5.** Playmates aplenty: Kimberly Phillips, Pamela Horton, Summer Altice, Christina Santiago and Crystal McCahill. **6.** Big Hoss of *Pawn Stars.* **7.** Bill Maher and Painted Ladies. **8.** PMOY 2012 Jaclyn Swedberg. **9.** Miss August 2004 Pilar Lastra, actor Jesse Bradford and Miss May 2012 Nikki Leigh. **10.** Hef with main squeezes Chelsea Ryan, Trisha Frick and Crystal.

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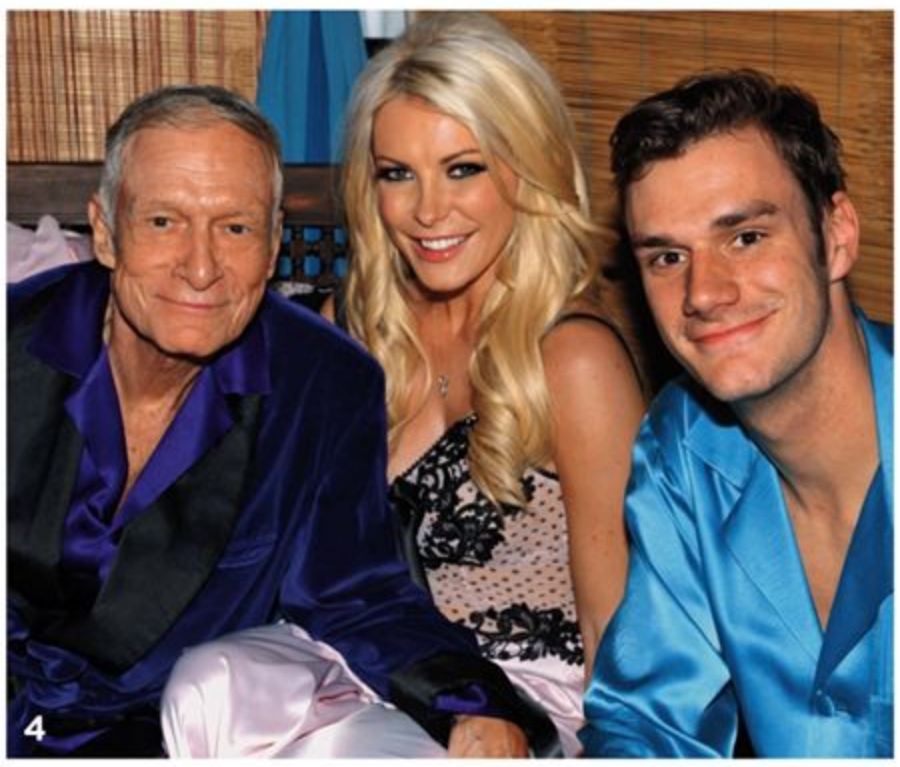
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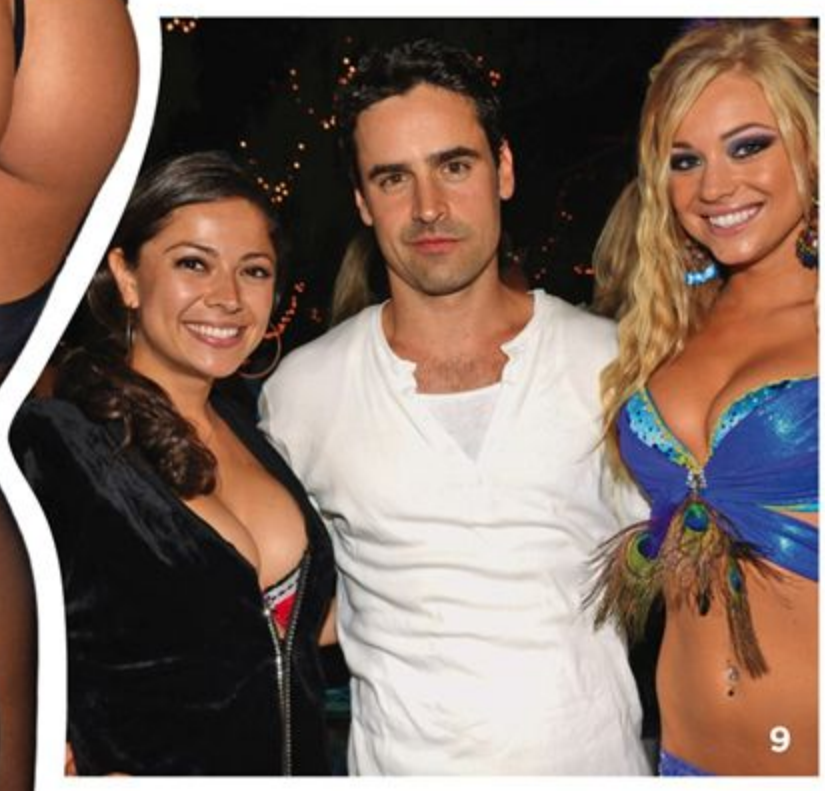
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DEAR PLAYBOY

One Hot Summer

Regarding *Jenny McCarthy* (July/August): Thanks for making America so beautiful.

Judge Lance Ito
Los Angeles, California

There's something about Jenny.... We couldn't have asked for anyone better to grace a summer issue. She has the body of a goddess, the smile of a princess and an all-around fun personality. Thanks to photographer Steve Shaw (the envy of so many of us) for the mesmerizing, classy images.

Freddy Garcia
Houston, Texas

THREE-STAR ISSUE

It was a pleasant surprise to pick up the July/August issue and find three of my favorite people: Jenny McCarthy, Ayn Rand (*Playboy Classic: Ayn Rand*) and Charlie Sheen (*Playboy Interview*). I admire McCarthy for the work she's done to raise awareness about autism. I read Alvin Toffler's *Playboy Interview* with Ayn Rand after finishing *We the Living* and *The Fountainhead,* and I was hooked. I have since passed her philosophy on to my kids. And then there's Sheen. I like the guy for giving the finger to Hollywood's entrenched mediocrity.

Nosh Mullafiroze
Raleigh, North Carolina

SMART SET

Thank you for the revealing *Playboy Interview* with Tom Cruise (June). Although he has been an object of derision, he presents himself as a thoughtful person with a deep sense of commitment. Maybe that will slow down the haters in the feeding frenzy over his divorce.

Jan Chciuk-Celt
Portland, Oregon

SOFT FOCUS

I love the softer photography in issues from the late 1960s and early 1970s and so was thrilled to see Stephen Wayda's shots of Playmate of the Year Jaclyn Swedberg (*Jaclyn Swedberg Is Playmate of the Year,* June).

Jeff Rusin
Lehighton, Pennsylvania

TAKING CONTROL

As a man who has had a lifelong interest in rectifying the problems of "underfucked" women (at least until I got married), I carefully read Kim Anami's beautiful description of the problem and the five solutions she implemented with her clients (*Carnal Knowledge,* July/August). Yet four of Anami's five solutions require the man to make a change. In my experience, the least interesting women (no matter how beautiful or sexy) are those who need a partner to get them off. The women who take charge of their own sexual engines are the ones who become lifelong partners and playmates.

Ron Blouch
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

LOST CAUSE

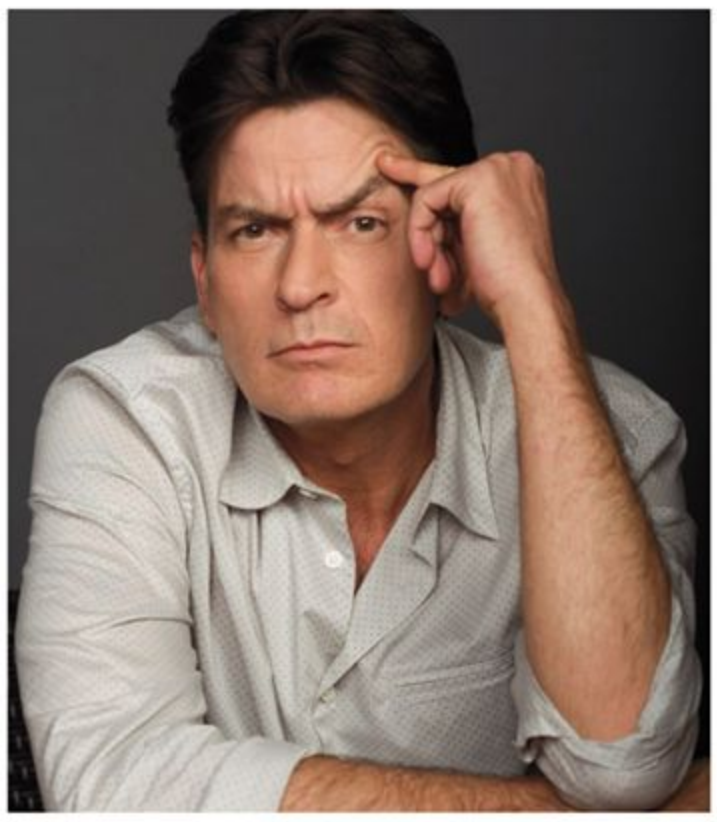
Although Jenny McCarthy is beautiful and intelligent, she has potentially done immeasurable harm to children whose parents did not vaccinate them because of her anti-vaccine pronouncements. The idea that childhood vaccines are a possible contributing factor to autism has been thoroughly discredited, yet McCarthy has never, to my knowledge, admitted that her beliefs are wrong.

Dr. John Manzella
York, Pennsylvania

She remains convinced of a connection and will likely never be persuaded otherwise.

A ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Most of the country has moved on from the Charlie Sheen show, but I can't help rooting for the guy. At the same time, whenever I catch a television broadcast



The Charlie Sheen show is not yet over.

of *Platoon* or *Wall Street,* I feel a tinge of sadness for the actor he might have been. Every time Sheen flashes that devilish, I'm-still-beating-the-system grin, I see Mickey Rourke's cheekbones.

J. Bryan McGeever
Stony Brook, New York

OUR COLUMNISTS

It may be hard for a jock or nerd or Joel Stein to imagine, but some of us are able to enjoy mathematics and philosophy without being socially, athletically or sexually inept ("Jocks vs. Nerds: A Peace Plan," *Men,* June).

Dave Benedetto
Gilmanton, New Hampshire

I've been an avid PLAYBOY reader for years, and I just want to say you've hit the jackpot with your *Men* and *Women* columns. Lisa Lampanelli is a politically incorrect crack-up, and her column is every bit as funny as her stand-up act. Joel Stein makes me laugh out loud. He hits the nail on the head with "How Forty Became the New Twenty"(July/August). I shared it with my wife to show her I'm not alone in my so-called immaturity.

Nicholas Adams
New York, New York

Hey, Stein—bite me. I'm 36 and am often told I need to grow up. Should I ignore my family while I read the paper and sip whiskey? That's how my father and grandfather did it. The fact that I read comic books, play video games and can't fix a damn thing in the house doesn't make me any less of a man. I spend 40 hours a week at a keyboard so I can earn enough money to hire somebody to shingle my roof. If you judge me solely by appearance—I am writing this while wearing heart-covered pajama pants and a King Kong shirt—I surely am a child. But I'm also about to make breakfast for my family and make sure they are happy and well taken care of today.

Eric Thompson
Spokane, Washington

I'm disappointed to see Lampanelli describe a bad sex tape as "more depressing than 9/11" ("Why Your Sex Tape Sucks," *Women,* June). I hate to sound like a person offended by every little thing, but I can't be the only patriotic citizen who sees disrespect in making light of the deaths of 2,977 people.

A.M. Trueman
Lewiston, Idaho

As a feminist and a longtime PLAYBOY reader, I can't figure out why you continue to print Lampanelli's insufferable harping

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and redundant platitudes. For the love of decency, please make it stop.

Liz Pardue-Schultz
Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina

I think I broke a rib laughing my way through "Leave It to Beavers" (*Women,* July/August). Thanks for adding Lisa to your roster of talent.

Larry Little
Plano, Texas

RAND REDUX

Thank you for reprinting the excerpt from your classic *Playboy Interview* with Ayn Rand, one of the best Q&As she ever did. However, though you describe her as a "conservative thinker," in the interview she expresses strong opposition to being labeled as such. That she was a "radical for capitalism" rather than a conservative is a regular theme in her writings. For example, see "Conservatism: An Obituary" in *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal.*

Michael Berliner
Los Angeles, California
Berliner is editor of Letters of Ayn Rand.

Rand is the L. Ron Hubbard of American political and economic philosophy.

Ryan Costa
Cleveland, Ohio

I found your excerpt so captivating I read it twice. It's amazing how Rand's ideas remain relevant almost 50 years later.

Amber Ward
Georgetown, South Carolina

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

In *Disappearance in the East* (May), a report on people who fake their own deaths, Lawrence Osborne notes that you can alter everything about yourself except your height. For many years I headed the fraud department of a large insurance company. We once received a $500,000 claim from a woman who said her husband had been murdered while visiting the Philippines. She had a death certificate and a photo of his body with three policemen standing over it. I hired an investigator in Manila to find the officers, and from them he learned the length of the body, which turned out to be six inches shorter than the insured. As a bonus, the investigator spotted the man at a political rally and snapped his photo. As a result, I was able to phone the woman with the news that her husband was still alive, though I couldn't tell her whose ashes she had on her mantel. Since no money had been paid, we didn't pursue legal action.

Ed Corton
Jupiter, Florida

LET HER FLY

Brian Bowen Smith's photos of Stephanie Corneliussen are magnificent (*Desert Fox,* June), but that lovely windswept portrait on the bottom of the first page deserves a spread of its own.

David Burroughs
Port Townsend, Washington

WE CAN REBUILD THEM

It's great to read what Hugh Herr and his team at MIT are accomplishing in the field of biomechatronics to help veterans who have lost limbs (*Bionic Man,* June). Herr

MIT's Hugh Herr: biomechatronic restorer.

may not believe the debt has been repaid for the loss of life during his 1982 rescue from Mount Washington, but I disagree. The work he has been inspired to do will improve the lives of thousands. I'd never tell him that, however. Let him remain driven.

Al Golden
Boyertown, Pennsylvania

TASTE MAKER

The Talented Mr. K (July/August) is a fascinating look inside a world of excess. If a movie is made of his story, wine dealer Rudy Kurniawan could be portrayed as a hero for fleecing those pretentious billionaires.

Kevin Smith
Washington, D.C.

FIRING BACK

I found Pat Jordan's article on open-carry gun laws (*Armed and Dangerous?,* June) to be fair and thought-provoking. I favor open carry for hikers, surveyors and others in the outdoors and small towns where it doesn't create undue public apprehension. But in some settings, concealed carry is better.

Jim Williamson
Dallas, Texas

I live in a rural area where it may take a police officer 30 to 40 minutes to reach me. That's why having the right to own and carry a firearm to protect family, neighbors and friends is a high priority to us "country folk."

Gary Derr
Campbell, Nebraska

For more letters in response to Jordan's piece, turn to page 55.

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PLAYBOY

Afterhours

-OCTOBER-
2012

BECOMING ATTRACTION

IGGY AZALEA

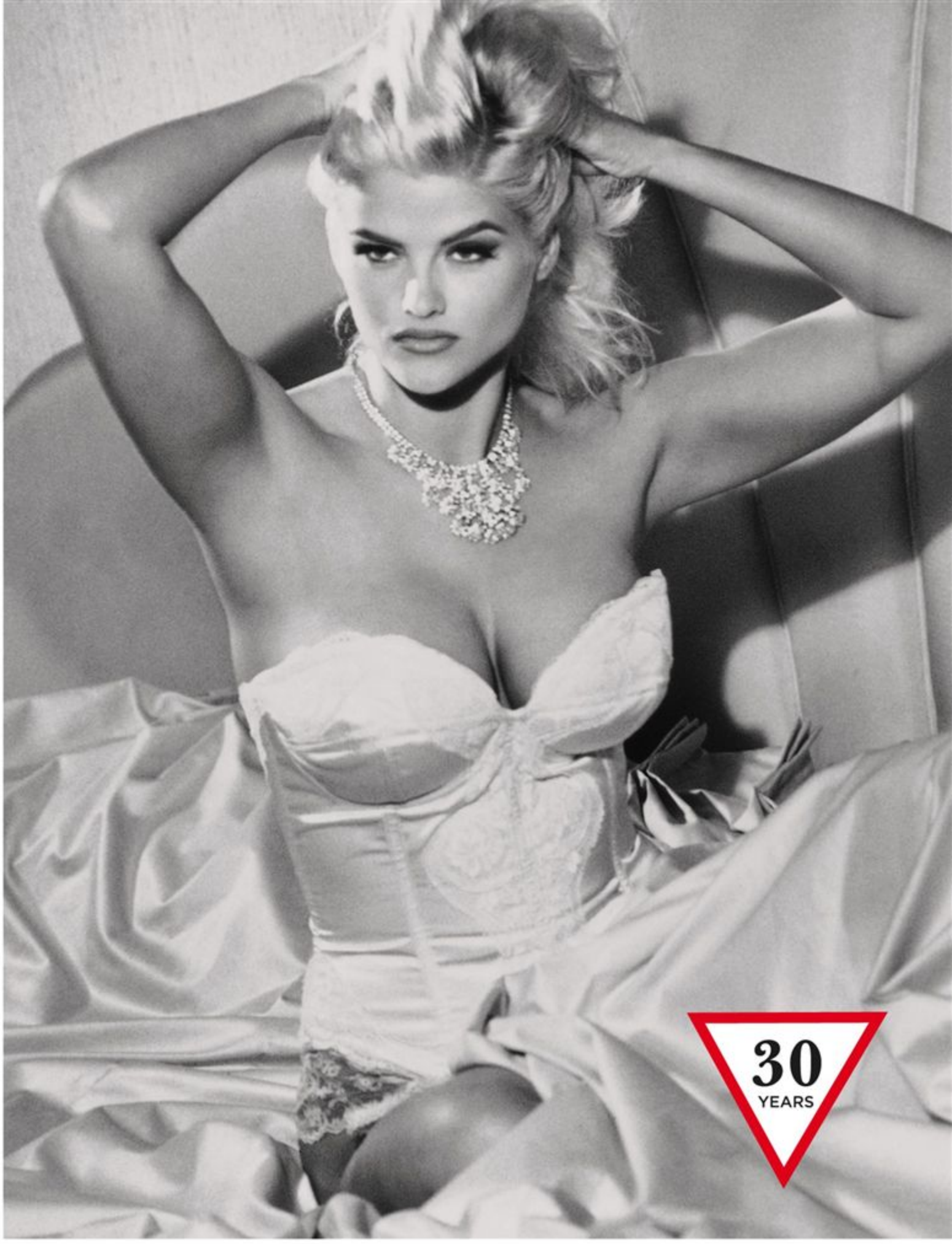
• ***SAY HELLO*** to the sexiest new face in hip-hop: 22-year-old Australian Iggy Azalea. Outrageous and gorgeous, with lyrics as twisted as her sense of humor, she's one of 2012's hottest new rappers; her latest release, this summer's *Glory*, is as triumphant as it sounds. She's even fresh off a global modeling campaign. Her secret? "Everything I do, I do because I own it," Iggy reveals. "If I didn't own it, I wouldn't say it." Nicely said.

Photography by **BROOKE NIPAR**
Contour by **GETTY IMAGES**

BIRTH OF A BOMBSHELL

AS GUESS TURNS 30, A PHOTOGRAPHER PRAISES THE ULTIMATE PINUP

• For 30 years, Guess has featured some of the most beautiful women on the planet, but none stands out like Anna Nicole Smith. With her tousled hair and sensual curves, Smith exuded an oversexed energy that felt barely contained behind her classic pinup looks. She appeared tailor-made for the Guess Girls ad campaign, with its mix of high fashion and brimming sexuality. So when Guess featured her in photos by Australian-born photographer Daniela Federici, the 1993 Playmate of the Year became a worldwide phenomenon. The ultimate Guess Girl was born. "Anna was sweet and had an innocence similar to Marilyn Monroe's. She was voluptuous, with long legs and arms, rounded bottom and bust and a tiny 19-inch waist," says Federici. "She represented the opposite of what was happening in fashion at the time: London grunge and skinny waif-like girls looking grumpy. Anna was curvy and radiated a playful happiness." Federici estimates she shot Smith more than 30 times in a six-year span, including six Guess shoots and a 1993 PLAYBOY cover. "She was a true 1950s-style beauty, a blonde Jessica Rabbit, but her soft, shy demeanor changed when she was made up. With hair and makeup Anna turned into a bombshell who commanded attention in any room," Federici says. "She was born in the wrong era."



UP IN SMOKE

THE WEIRD WAR OVER THE FIRST MARIJUANA MACHINE

• Where's the weed? In the 17 states where medicinal marijuana is legal, the answer has changed from dime bags to dispensaries. The latest pickup spot for the pain-relieving sticky-icky? Marijuana vending machines. But all is not simpatico. Two companies, Dispense Labs and Medbox, are battling over their respective green machines, as the newest drug war unfolds with lawsuits rather than AK-47s.

On April 20—4/20, the unofficial stoner holiday—Dispense Labs unveiled the Autospense. Encased in a security cage, the machine allows daytime access to users with a registered ID card and PIN and after-hours access via fingerprint recognition. A press blitz ensued. The only problem: A virtually identical machine had already been patented by someone else.

"I invented this machine in 2007," says Vincent Mehdizadeh, CEO and founder of Prescription Vending Machines, a subsidiary of Medbox. His company had already served Dispense Labs with a cease-and-desist letter when the publicity tie-in with pot's biggest holiday put Mehdizadeh in a mellow-harshing mood. "I was pissed. You try to do something good for the industry and you have this riffraff come in and totally step on my idea."

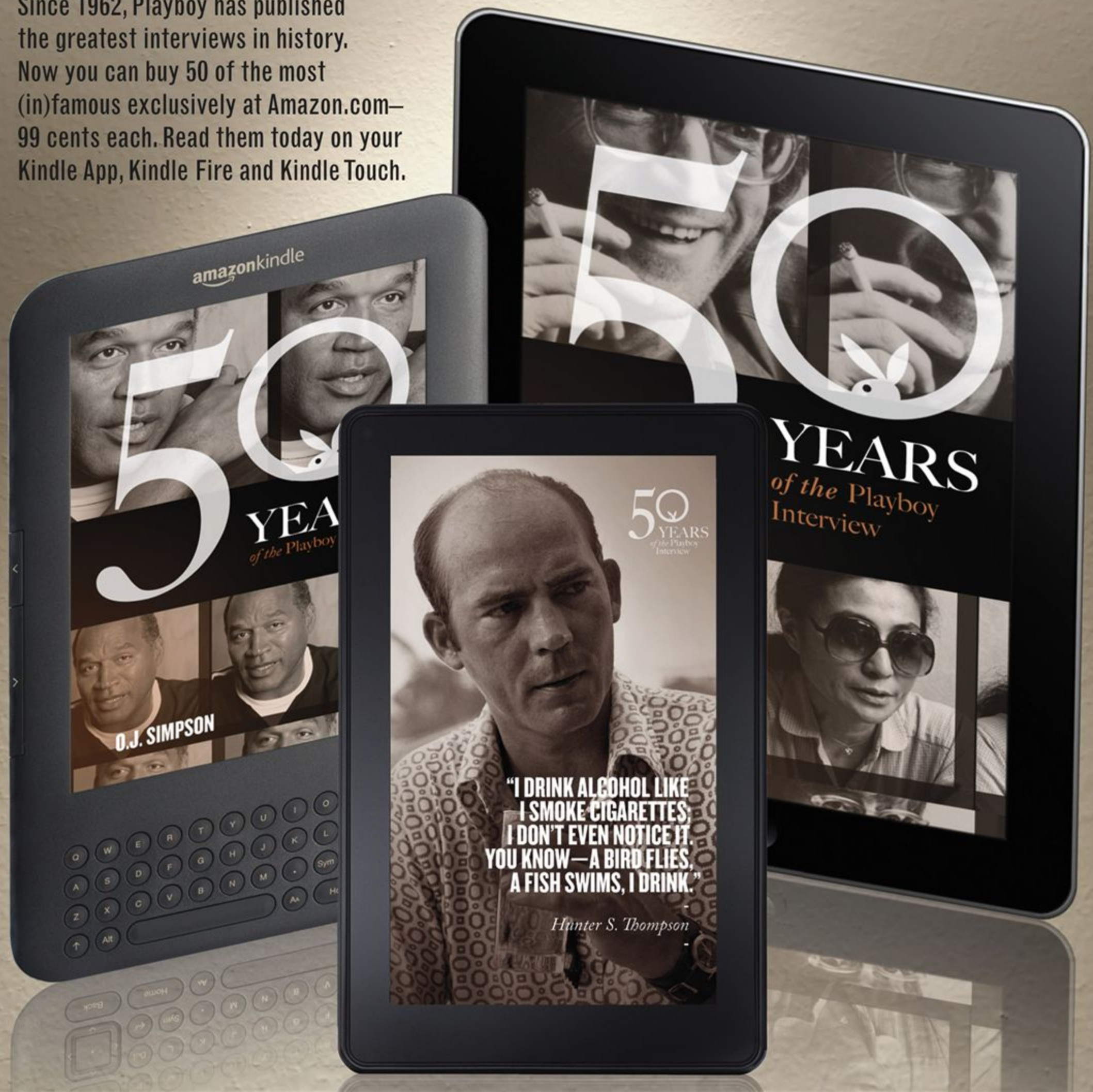
Dispense Labs CEO Joe DeRobbio counters that Mehdizadeh "basically sued me for being a competitor. He was pissed off because we built a better mousetrap. To say that we're a small fly-by-night company is uneducated on his part."

Maybe everyone should spark up and mellow out.

—Chauncey Hollingsworth

50 years of PLAYBOY INTERVIEWS

Since 1962, Playboy has published the greatest interviews in history. Now you can buy 50 of the most (in)famous exclusively at Amazon.com– 99 cents each. Read them today on your Kindle App, Kindle Fire and Kindle Touch.



WITH GREAT POWER...

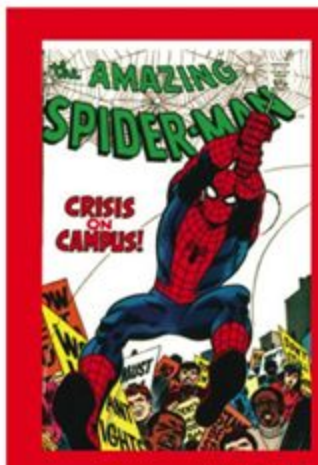
The author of *Marvel Comics: The Untold Story* traces how the comic giant made social issues as vital to its heroes' stories as gamma rays, superserums and spider bites

• The first comic books had no qualms about being propaganda—Captain America punches Hitler on the cover of his *first* issue. Later comics faced divisive social issues, the type that couldn't be stopped with a punch. Sean Howe, author of *Marvel Comics: The Untold Story* (Harper), says Marvel—led by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby (who quipped, "Comics is journalism")—tackled these topics faster than rival DC Comics. "A lot of these social issues are philosophical matters that people struggle with," says Howe. "Putting these conflicts into comics just makes for better, smarter comics." Here, Howe takes us through some of Marvel's punch-ups with society. *—Eric Alt*

1968

RACE RELATIONS

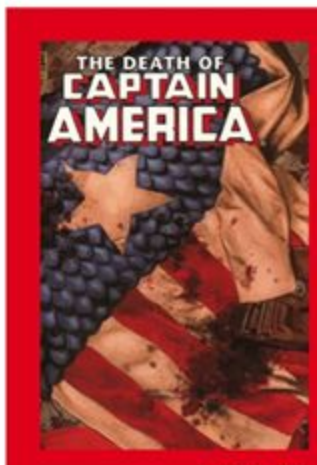
• Marvel positioned Professor X and Magneto as analogs for the peaceful Martin Luther King Jr. and militant Malcolm X. Decades later, this influenced the *X-Men* movies as director Bryan Singer's writing partner "was insistent that the metaphor was essential to the *X-Men* mythos," says Howe.



1969

VIETNAM

• "Vietnam was definitely one of the clumsier transformations," says Howe. "The *Spider-Man* 'Crisis on Campus!' issue seems as though Stan Lee is rewriting things as he goes." Peter Parker flip-flops between support of and contempt for the students—a representation of the country's own indecision.



2006

WAR ON TERROR

• The *Civil War* series pits Marvel heroes against one another over a new mutant-registration law. "It doesn't seem like it's really taking a stand," Howe says of the series' take on the Patriot Act and civil rights. Instead, writers decided to leave readers with more questions than answers.

2012

GAY RIGHTS

• This year, openly gay Alpha Flight member Northstar married his longtime companion, demonstrating Marvel's stance on the topic. It's a long way from the days when a writer tried to make a character HIV-positive. Says Howe, "He was basically told, 'We're not going to do that.'"

MUSE IT OR LOSE IT

ART STAR JEFF KOONS FINDS INSPIRATION IN THE VOLUPTUOUS CURVES OF PAM ANDERSON

• Artist Jeff Koons has thrived for decades by mining pop culture in often hilarious and consistently profitable ways (witness his gold-plated, life-size porcelain sculpture of Michael Jackson and pet chimp Bubbles; witness the $25 million sale of his stainless steel rendition of a balloon). Much of his work, however, is decidedly NSFW. While Koons has drawn inspiration from women in the past (most notably in the 1990s from his then-wife, Italian porn star–politician La Cicciolina), his current inspiration is none other than Pam Anderson. Anderson served as quasi muse for several of the paintings in Koons's *Easyfun-Ethereal* series, which were recently on display at the Schirn gallery in Frankfurt. (See *Pam,* pictured at left.) Koons tells PLAYBOY, "When I was making my *Easyfun-Ethereal* paintings, I used Pam's form as that of a contemporary Venus or Aphrodite. Pam's beauty is classical and mythic." We couldn't have said it better. *—Eric Steinman*

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HIP HONG KONG

LOOSEN THE TIE, OR DITCH IT ALTOGETHER. H.K. IS READY FOR YOU TO GO ROGUE

With money funneling through Hong Kong at warp speed, business and pleasure are taken to extremes. Though the label-obsessed continue to flock to the high-rise clubs and high-end department stores, a new boom in indie shops, bars and restaurants is injecting the increasingly glittering city with a thrilling dose of street cred. Here's how to tap into high-low H.K.—*Jeralyn Gerba*

1.

2.

3.

4.

H.K.'S COOLEST NEIGHBORHOOD

Escape H.K. Island's labyrinth of malls and hit the street-level shops of Hollywood Road and Aberdeen Street, straddling the Sheung Wan and Central districts. You'll know you're in the right place when you come upon a street-fashion photo shoot or any number of Japanese-inspired artisanal coffee shops. Perfect your classic Hong Kong–businessman-meets-1970s-Milanese-playboy look by ordering a made-to-measure suit at **Moustache (1).** Owners Ellis Kreuger and Alex Daye, local arbiters of taste, also showcase oddball Chinese ephemera and produce guidebooks to the neighborhood. Stop in for an expertly pulled *ristretto* at hipster hangout **Barista Jam (2)** and then visit boutique design shop **Konzepp (3).** The bright yellow polyhedron storefront is as striking as the well-curated merchandise (tech gadgets, housewares, locally harvested honey). For a heady hit of culture, check out the Chinese and international contemporary art at **Cat Street Gallery (4).**

CRASH COURSE: HULLETT HOUSE

This opulent hotel in a former police headquarters delivers the creature comforts you've come to expect (fast Wi-Fi, impeccable service) and a few you could never have imagined, such as a re-creation of the 10-course dinner served to guests on the *Titanic.* Stay in the Casam Suite, decorated with Warholian Mao paintings.

EAT, DRINK, MAN, HONG KONG

A five-point plan for your trip

BRUNCH
Brave the wait at epic, chaotic dim sum temple Tim Ho Wan, the world's cheapest Michelin-starred restaurant.

DINNER
Grab yakitori at Yardbird, a laid-back spot run by a chef who used to work at New York restaurant Masa.

PARTY
Get your cocktail on at 001, a speakeasy situated behind an unmarked door at a wet market off Queen's Road.

AFTERPARTY
Karaoke happens. Now you must eat. Get a steaming bowl of wonton soup and an egg roll at Good Hope Noodle.

REACH THE BEACH
Soothe your hangover with a double dose of H.K. milk tea and a trek to glorious Sai Wan beach.

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HOT DISH *from a* COOL RESTAURANT

THE DISH:

JAMÓN IBÉRICO AND SHISHITO PEPPERS

• Salt, chili heat and glorious pork fat come together in this mash-up of all that's good about Spanish and Japanese foods. It's the brainchild of chef Zakary Pelaccio, who deploys spicy-sweet shishito peppers to balance the buttery fat of Ibérico ham. Welcome to your new favorite midnight snack.

THE SPOT:

FATTY 'CUE

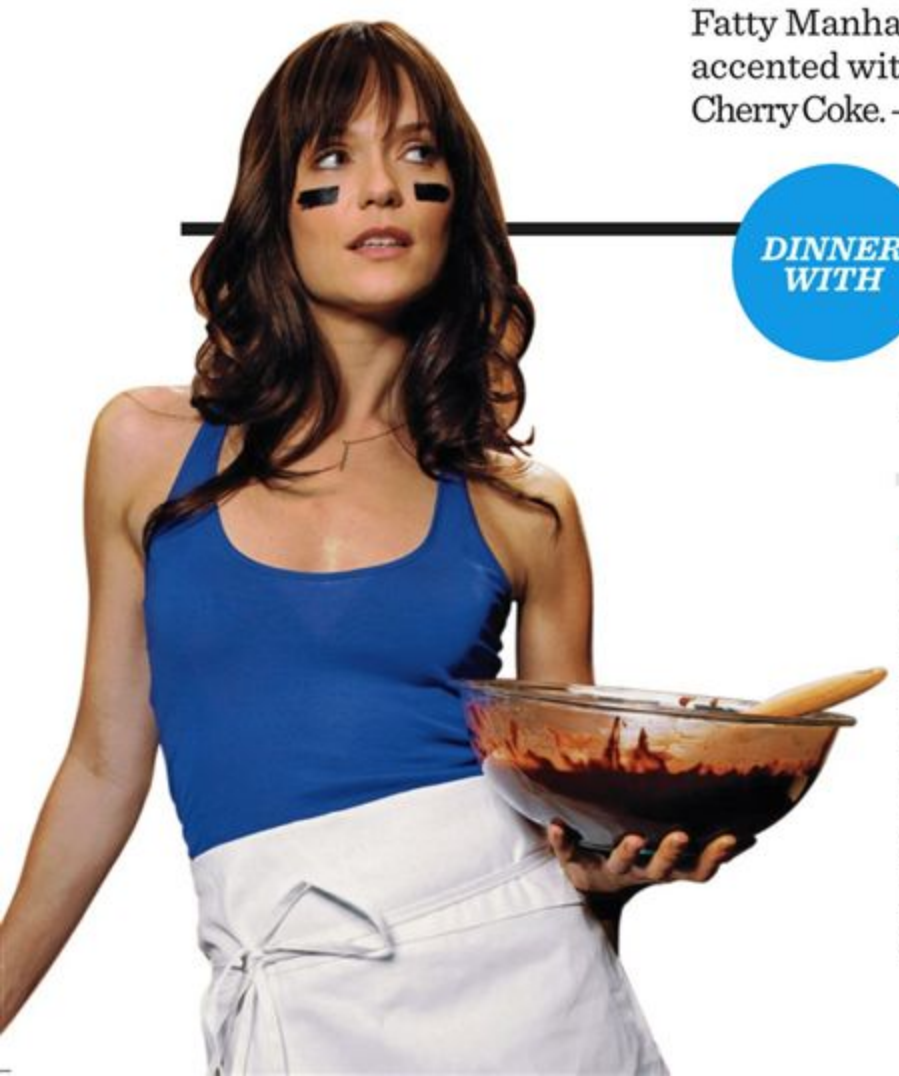
• Even before you enter Pelaccio's West Village restaurant Fatty 'Cue you know you're in for something primally good: The door handle is a pig's trotter cast in silver. Inside you'll find a boisterous celebration of American barbecue and Southeast Asian flavors. Quench your thirst with the Fatty Manhattan cocktail, accented with smoked Cherry Coke. —*Eric Steinman*

JAMÓN IBÉRICO AND SHISHITO PEPPERS

SERVES 2

- *¼ cup olive oil (the best you can afford)*
- *6 oz. shishito peppers*
- *Kosher salt*
- *3 oz. jamón Ibérico, thinly sliced into two-inch strips*

➳ *Heat olive oil in a cast-iron pan over medium-high heat. Add the peppers and let them blister, periodically shaking the pan for about four minutes. Season with salt and place in bowl. Toss ham on top, split the peppers with a wooden spoon, and stir just enough to get a little chili oil from the peppers to coat the fatty ham slices. From Pelaccio's cookbook Eat With Your Hands (HarperCollins).*



DINNER WITH

KATIE ASELTON

OUR FAVORITE GUY'S GIRL ACTRESS CONFESSES TO HER CURRENT FOOD OBSESSIONS AND THE ONE THING SHE WON'T EAT

• "If I were ever to take my own life, I would like to drown in a vat of truffles—just go face-down into a huge vat of truffle risotto. Just drop me in like in *Terminator 2*. I'm a big whore for truffles. I'm also a big fan of kale. Little Dom's in our neighborhood in Los Angeles has one of the best kale salads I've ever eaten. It also has amazing pasta dishes and a divine white clam pizza on Friday nights, with an obscene amount of clams and garlic, that I've tried to re-create. You can't beat that savory umami taste. What don't I like? Foam. It's a gnarly trend, and it doesn't taste good. I'm not a big fan of egg white in my drink either. Anything that resembles semen should be nowhere near my food."

"I would like to drown in a vat of truffles."

Katie Aselton stars as Jenny MacArthur on FX's The League, which returns this month.

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IN LIKE GIN

ARTISANAL AMERICAN DISTILLERS ARE CRAFTING FULL-BODIED VERSIONS OF THE CLASSIC SPIRIT

• If the word *gin* conjures thoughts of warm summer days and sharp gin and tonics, prepare to have your mind blown. For years London dry was the standard style of gin (which, for the record, was invented by the Dutch). But American distillers are tweaking the formula, adding such homegrown botanicals as elderflower and California bay laurel leaves. The results are still gin (they include juniper as a flavor—the one and only requirement for the category) but are so complex and smooth they're perfect for sipping or mixing this fall.

DOROTHY PARKER AMERICAN GIN, $30
This gin from New York Distilling Company straddles the pond (it tastes a bit like London gin but with more floral American aromatics) and as such can be swapped into traditional gin cocktails.

ST. GEORGE DRY RYE GIN, $35
One of three gins from the brilliant St. George distillery in the Bay Area, this slightly sweet and subtly spicy version shines all on its own. Try sipping it straight, like bourbon or brandy.

DEATH'S DOOR GIN, $30
London dry by way of Wisconsin. Local fennel mellows this kinder, gentler bottling. One supersmooth dry martini, coming right up.

GREENHOOK GINSMITHS AMERICAN DRY GIN, $32
This limited-run gin produced in the hipster distillery mecca of Brooklyn is citrusy and smooth. Mix with freshly squeezed grapefruit juice, add ice and pour into a tall glass for a near-instant cocktail.

LEOPOLD'S NAVY STRENGTH AMERICAN GIN, $45
Legend has it that gunpowder on British ships would still ignite if this 114-proof gin were spilled on it in battle. Intensely aromatic, it produces a supersmooth gin and tonic.

RECIPE

BITTER ORANGE NEGRONI

From Scott Beattie, mixologist extraordinaire and bar manager of Goose & Gander in Napa Valley.

1 oz. St. George Botanivore gin
1 oz. Carpano Antica Formula vermouth
¾ oz. Campari
¼ oz. Bitter Truth orange bitters

Stir liquids for 20 seconds in a mixing glass filled with ice, strain into a martini glass and garnish with orange zest.

Photography by **DIMITRI NEWMAN**

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MODERN PLAYBOY

LAPO ELKANN'S DOLCE VITA

HOW TO GET HIS ITALIAN JET-SETTER LOOK

• In the world of international playboys, Lapo Elkann stands out for his fearless personal style. The 34-year-old Italian American heir to the Fiat empire owns a baby-blue Ferrari upholstered in denim, regularly tops best-dressed lists and accessorizes his over-the-top outfits with honey-skinned Mediterranean beauties. He also inspired Russell Brand's performance as the eponymous character in the remake of *Arthur*. As if that weren't cool enough, he runs Ferrari's Tailor-Made customization program, and as a marketing exec at Fiat he relaunched the new 500, arguably the chicest subcompact on the face of the planet. This all may sound unattainably opulent, but with our cheat sheet you can look the part.

STYLE SLANG: *sprezz*

Abbreviation of *sprezzatura*, Italian for "studied nonchalance."

Usage: "Red gingham shirt, red jacket—that shit's sprezz."

DRESS LIKE AN ITALIAN

There's a logic behind this crazy look. Here's why it works.

1. EYE-TALIAN
Why wear contacts when you can color coordinate your glasses with your cuffs and lapels?

2. GO BIG
The supersized peak lapels say, "Yes, I'm going to pump up the volume on this insanely loud jacket."

3. TIE IT TOGETHER
The white pocket square echoes the white shirt.

4. DRESS IT DOWN
Faded denim picks up the blue in the jacket and keeps it from looking too formal and fussy.

5. STAND STRONG
Killer shoes are the foundation of the outfit; they're white like the shirt and pocket square.

THE LAPO OF LUXURY

Lapo Elkann's design firm, Italia Independent, is the go-to brand for modern Italian cool.

DENIM BLAZER
You too can get Elkann's signature extra-wide lapels in everyday denim.

CAMO GLASSES
He can afford a camo Ferrari. You can afford his camo sunglasses.

GUCCI FIAT 500
Elkann brokered the collaboration between Fiat and luxury label Gucci for this limited-edition hatchback.

RUN, RETRO, RUN

GET SOME COLOR WITH 1980S-INSPIRED RUNNING SHOES THAT ARE TOO STYLISH FOR THE TRACK

• We've emerged from the dark ages of running-shoe design in which arch support and breathable materials came first and style came in dead last. Today, heritage manufacturers are making shoes that take their design cues from the 1980s and 1990s (simple graphics, a clean silhouette, bright colors) and look cool enough to wear with jeans—the darker the better to maximize the color contrast. Bonus: Wear them on a treadmill and you'll stand out in a gym full of also-rans.

REEBOK
Ex-O-Fit Lo, $70.

ADIDAS
Marathon 88, $75.

NEW BALANCE
574 Backpack Collection, $70.

KEEP IT CLEAN | THREE WAYS TO KEEP YOUR KICKS PRISTINE

SOFT-BRISTLE TOOTHBRUSH
Use it to clean mesh and suede.

MR. CLEAN MAGIC ERASER
It's the sneaker-head tool of choice for keeping white rubber white.

DISH SOAP
Spot-clean stains with water and dish soap.

Photography by **JOSEPH SHIN**

MOVIE OF THE MONTH

LOOPER

By Stephen Rebello

• This gritty, dystopian time-travel thriller has Joseph Gordon-Levitt playing an icy Mob hit man whose new target turns out to be his future self, played by Bruce Willis. Set in 2072 and written and directed by Rian Johnson, the movie features not only Emily Blunt, Jeff Daniels, lots of violence and breakneck action but also moral dilemmas and emotional resonance. "For moviemakers, time travel is tempting like candy, but if you work it too hard, it becomes like molasses," says Johnson. "In our movie, we use time travel to set up a situation that involves the characters, then time travel gets out of the way to let the action and characters play things out. Joe really studied Bruce's voice, his mannerisms. One of my best days on set was shooting a fight scene between Joe and Bruce and watching Bruce coach Joe, like, 'Now, just shift your weight like this....' That was great."

DVD OF THE MONTH

MAGIC CITY

By Greg Fagan

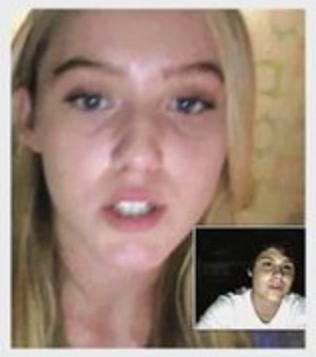
• You may guess that a *Mad Men*–meets–*Boardwalk Empire* pitch got this Starz series into the premium-cable waters, given its 1959 trappings and Mob-centric story line. However they sold it, we don't care, because *Magic City* scores on its own with exquisite sets, a gorgeous cast and the patiently evolving tale of Ike Evans (Jeffrey Dean Morgan). Good guy Ike co-owns Miami Beach's most fabulous hotel with nasty piece of work Ben Diamond (Danny Huston). A family–vs.–the Family narrative drives the action, with widowed Ike, his grown sons and his younger wife (Olga Kurylenko) struggling for control against Diamond and his devious bride (Jessica Marais). There's even a shrewd "working girl" played by Elena Satine (right). Despite a few flaws, it's worth checking into. **Best extra:** A behind-the-scenes look at the exquisite re-creation of midcentury Miami. (BD) ¥¥¥½

TEASE FRAME

Cinemax's sexy stalwart Hannah Fierman hits the big screen this month in the horror movie *V/H/S*.

Fuggedabout FOUND FOOTAGE

THE CASE AGAINST A TIRED MOVIE GIMMICK



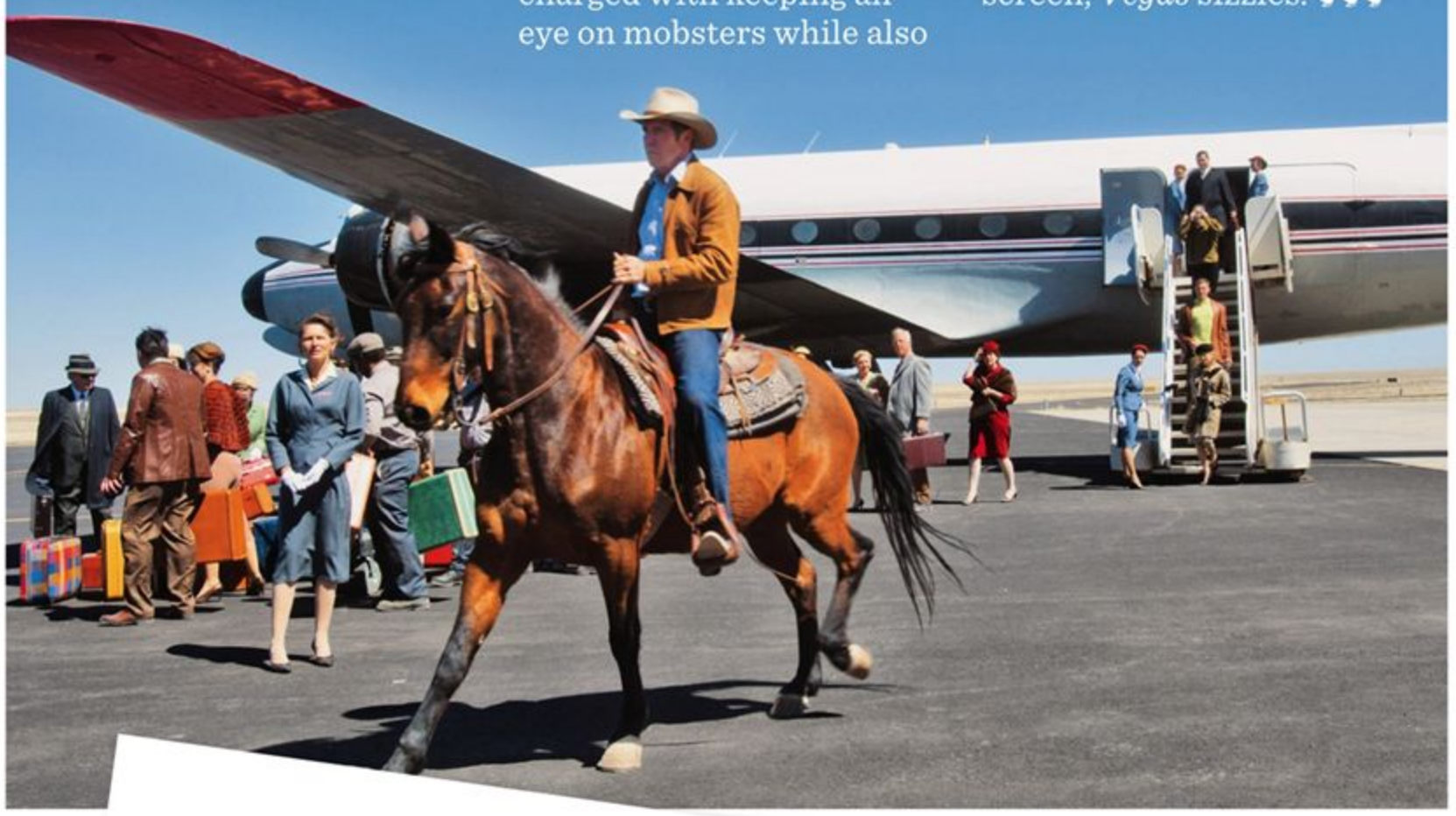
It's October, so here comes *Paranormal Activity 4 (above)*—that's right, the fourth in the series of supernatural "found footage" flicks made for peanuts and likely to drain $100 million from ticket buyers. What's up with the popularity of movies and TV shows supposedly chopped together from shaky documentary or low-tech surveillance-camera footage? When badly done, found footage is easily the most irritatingly bogus but financially profitable filmmaking gimmick since 3-D. *Cannibal Holocaust* may have gotten there first in 1980, but 19 years later *The Blair Witch Project* grossed more than $248 million on a $60,000 budget. The surprise blockbuster stoked the candid-camera frenzy that has now bled over into superhero movies (*Chronicle*), teen comedies (*Project X*) and TV shows (*The River*). The low budgets let these filmmakers appear to be keeping it real, but the found-footage gambit also gives them a free pass for so-so acting, sloppy technique and failing to show such budget-bloating effects as ghosts and monsters. If our heroes are being chased by otherworldly beasties, why don't they just drop the freaking camera and run like hell? Even while we watch some of the better stuff like *Cloverfield, Troll Hunter, Chronicle* and the Spanish-import *[Rec]*, these questions nag. But as we suffer through movies like *The Devil Inside, The Amityville Haunting* and *Apollo 18*, we just keep hoping those camcorders and surveillance cameras will run out of power.—*S.R.*

MUST-WATCH TV

VEGAS

By Josef Adalian

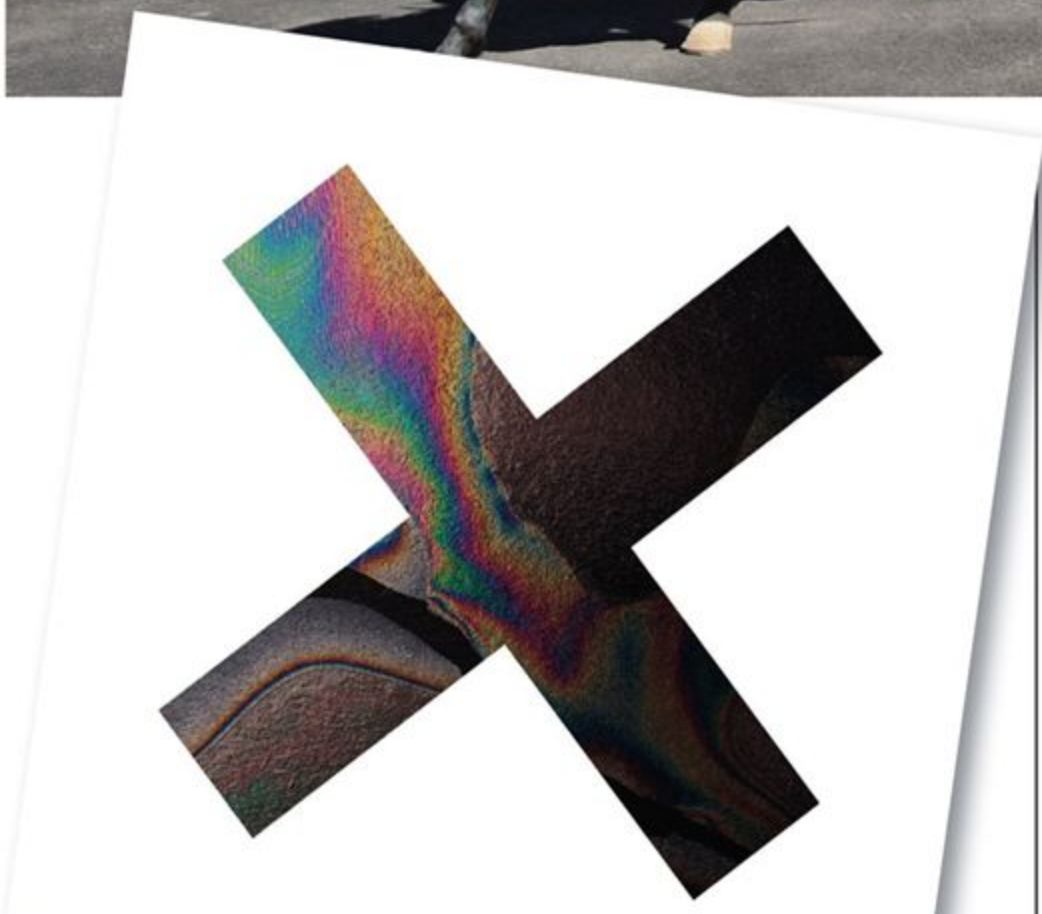
• Ever since the first *CSI* exploded onto the scene in 2000, CBS has been trying to mine more ratings gold from Las Vegas—without much success. (Anyone remember *Dr. Vegas* or *The Defenders*?) Undaunted by previous crap-outs, the network is back at the tables with *Vegas,* a 1960s period drama based on some little-known Vegas history. Don't let the regrettably generic title turn you off; this is a show with some grand aspirations. Dennis Quaid plays rancher-turned-lawman Ralph Lamb, an accidental sheriff (and actual Vegas icon) charged with keeping an eye on mobsters while also hunting down (sometimes on horseback) the sorts of ordinary thugs drawn to a city built on sin. Matching Quaid icy stare for icy stare is Michael Chiklis, in fine evil form as a Mafia henchman destined to clash with Lamb. The show falls a little flat trying to be *CSI* without the high-tech toys, but when Quaid and Chiklis are together on-screen, *Vegas* sizzles. ¥¥¥



THE FALL'S WORST NEW TV SHOWS

THREE SHOWS YOU SHOULD AVOID

• Most new shows fail. Some merit a second chance, but others should never have made it to the air at all. We've uncovered three turkeys that deserve to be cooked by Thanksgiving. Our Must-Flee TV list: ABC's aliens-among-us sitcom *The Neighbors* (it makes us long for the *Coneheads* movie); CBS's gay-straight buddy-com *Partners* (don't ask; this smells); and NBC's *Guys With Kids* (dudes+diapers=d'oh!). You've been warned.—*J.A.*



ALBUM

COEXIST

By Rob Tannenbaum

• Shy people don't chase rock stardom—music is made by exhibitionists, egomaniacs and neurotics, which is why being a music fan is so entertaining. But the xx, a British trio, has won worldwide acclaim for a sound built around shyness; it's as though New Order were whispering songs in your ear. The xx's new record, *Coexist,* has rare qualities: It's cautious, faint, slight, shivery. If that sounds unappealing, lots of other bands are still eager to yell at you. ¥¥¥

GAME OF THE MONTH

RESIDENT EVIL 6

By Jason Buhrmester

• Call this the golden age of zombies. From *The Walking Dead* and *World War Z* to *Plants vs. Zombies,* the undead are living large. If this modern zombie renaissance has a patient zero, it is *Resident Evil.* The 16-year-old video game series did undead long before this current wave of popularity—and still does it well. The key is a plot bigger than maniacal brain eating. Part Tom Clancy, part *28 Days Later,* the series follows government agents fighting a corporation that manufactures zombie-making chemicals—and the bioterrorists who would use them. *Resident Evil 6* (360, PC, PS3) finds the president infected and agents on the hunt for a deadly new strain called the C-virus. Through three interwoven story lines across North America, China and Eastern Europe, the action alternates between creepy exploration missions and all-out warfare against monster hordes. Smarter than the average flesh eater, *Resident Evil*'s creatures can run, jump, wield weapons and mutate when injured. Get ready to run for your life. ¥¥¥¥

40.3

LeBron James's vertical, as measured in inches by the sensor inside Nike's Hyperdunk sneakers.

Size of proposed zombie theme park in Detroit:

200 ACRES

Total amount raised to build it:

$9,399

A quantitative analysis of nearly

500,000

songs from 1955 to 2010 found that today's instrumentation and recording techniques have less diversity and that music gets one decibel louder every

8 YEARS.

1,200

Number of Cuban cigars ordered by President John F. Kennedy shortly before he declared Cuban trade illegal.

Cost of a trip on Virgin Galactic's space-tourism flight scheduled to begin next year:

$200,000

5

Minutes of weightlessness during the two-hour journey.

Number of "likes" for Eminem, making him the most-liked person on Facebook:

60,000,000

;-) 31

Percent of adults 18 to 29 who've received sexts.

THAT CAN'T BE TRUE

37%

of smartphone users have used the device to verify something they saw on television.

In 1991 Dubai counted one skyscraper in its skyline; today it has almost

300

4.71 GAL

Size of the daiquiri made in honor of Ernest Hemingway's 113th birthday.

6.5'

Height of the cocktail glass used to hold it.

Number of daiquiris "Papa" is said to have drunk in one sitting:

13

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RIDE THE SNAKE

THE VIPER BITES AGAIN

• Like a superhero rising from the dead, the all-new 2013 SRT Viper has rolled out of its Conner Avenue plant and onto the streets of Detroit, ready to take on just about anything. The old-gen Dodge Viper was left for roadkill after the 2009 bankruptcy of Chrysler (Dodge's parent company). Now Fiat is running Chrysler, and what do you know? The two-seat supercar has been reborn with Italianesque styling cues. Still, this Viper is all-American where it counts. Beneath that blood-red spandex is some serious Detroit muscle (see engine stats below). The car hits showrooms this month. Price: about $100,000 and up.

MOTOR CITY

In the all-new SRT Viper's nose: an 8.4-liter V10 pumping out 640 horsepower and 600 foot-pounds of torque

TIME FLIES

THE AMERICAN SUPERCAR

1953 | GM Firebird I
A car with a jet engine! Detroit would never be the same.

1962 | Shelby Cobra
Carroll Shelby unleashed the world's fastest production car.

1967 | Ford GT40 MK III
The customer version of the legendary Le Mans racer.

1967 | Corvette Sting Ray L88
A big-block Vette for the track. Only 20 were made.

1970 | Plymouth Superbird
Otherwise known as the King from the movie Cars.

1981 | DeLorean
Flux capacitor available as an upgrade.

2006 | Ford GT
Playboy hit 180 mph in one on a Nevada highway.

GREEN MONSTERS

WHICH ELECTRIC CAR IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

NISSAN LEAF

• Pros: plenty of punch. So quiet it has a sound generator to warn pedestrians. Arguably the best all-electric so far. Cons: Battery drains fast at highway speeds. Stats: about $27,700 after tax rebate, 73-mile range, energy equivalent to 99 mpg.

FORD FOCUS EV

• Pros: more powerful and faster charging than the Leaf, great styling, made in America. Cons: It's new and has limited availability; is it ready for the big time? Stats: about $31,700 after tax rebate, 76-mile range, energy equivalent to 105 mpg.

MITSUBISHI MEV SE

• Pros: high efficiency. Quick-charge DC station provides 80 percent charge in 25 minutes. Cons: Looks like a golf cart and drives like one. A full charge from an outlet takes 22.5 hours. Stats: about $22,500 after tax rebate, 62-mile range, energy equivalent to 112 mpg.

CHEVY VOLT

• The problem with electric autos: range anxiety. With four people in the car and the AC on, that battery needle drops fast. Enter the Volt, an electric car with a backup 1.4-liter gas engine—just in case. The Volt is an ideal ride for a guy with a short commute, even if he is a weekend warrior. Pros: no range anxiety, snappy styling. Cons: high price, and you get only 35 miles on a full electric charge. Stats: about $32,000 after tax rebate, energy equivalent to 98 mpg on its electric motor.

WHEELS OF FORTUNE

• The 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO pictured here, made for star racer Stirling Moss (right), became the world's most expensive car this summer when Seattle billionaire Craig McCaw paid $35 million for it. A 250 GTO is also the most expensive car ever crashed: Biz titan Christopher Cox smashed one worth $31 million in July.

HIGH STRUNG

AS ARCHERY SOARS IN POPULARITY, A LOOK AT THE BASICS OF THE BOW AND ARROW

Call this the year of the archer. From *The Avengers* and *Hunger Games* to the Olympics, Americans everywhere are drawing back and letting loose. Here's how to get started on this classic pastime.

CURVE APPEAL

For target shooting, stick to the recurve bow. It's named for the way the limbs, designed to curl away from the archer, are bent backward—or recurved—by the tautness of the string, giving the bow its power. The design is thousands of years old and was used by everyone from the Egyptians to the Huns. Recurves are considered more challenging to shoot than a compound bow and are the only bows allowed in the Olympics.

FIRING LINE

Olympic archers shoot modern or freestyle recurve bows that bear only a vague resemblance to traditional wood bows. Carbon-fiber limbs; machined aluminum handles, or risers; slender wind-cheating arrows and long stabilizers to steady your aim are standard equipment. At $699, the Hoyt Formula RX riser (pictured, limbs sold separately) is an excellent piece of gear to draw back on.

ON TARGET

Before you "nock" your first arrow (the term for locking an arrow onto the string), you'll need arrows custom cut to match your bow's draw weight (the force in pounds it takes to draw the bow). Other gear to consider: a basic hip quiver, a finger tab to protect your digits and a bow stringer, used to attach and remove the string. Remember: The bull's-eye is 70 meters away, so you might also want to grab a sight. Trust us.
—John Marrin

Photography by
JOSEPH SHIN

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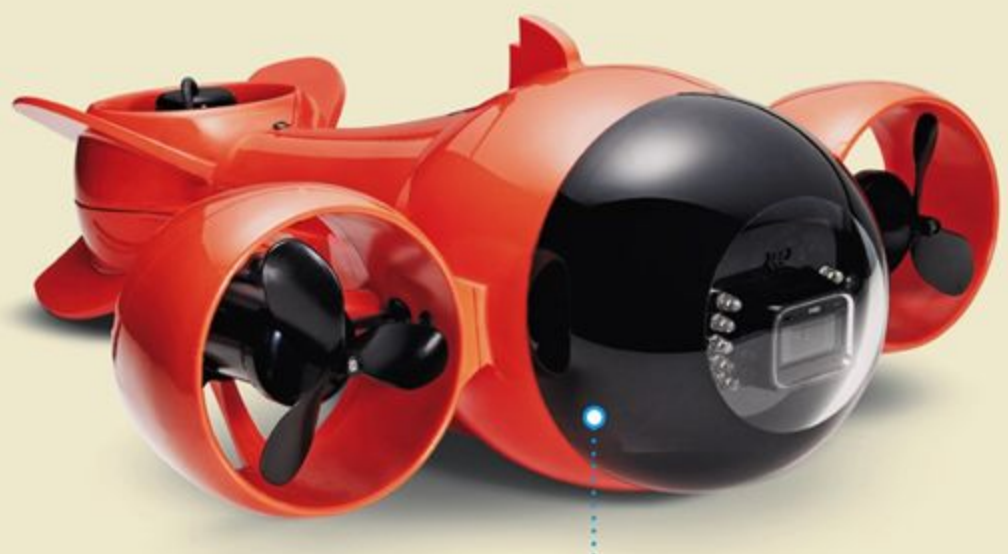
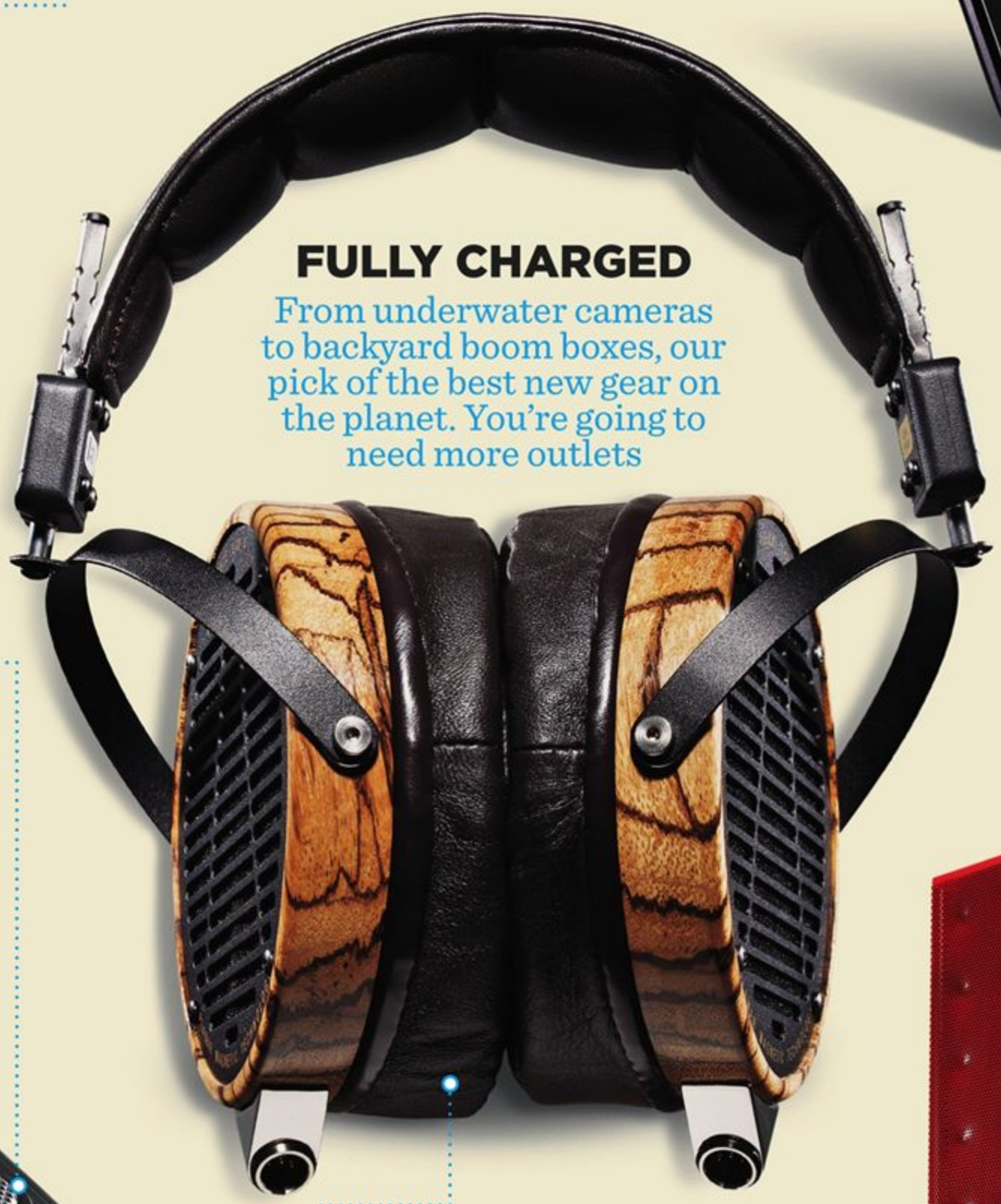


DEEP DIVE

Let James Cameron journey 36,000 feet below sea level. We'll sit beachside and use the Aquabotix HydroView ($3,995, aquabotix.com), an underwater camera remote-controlled by your iPad and capable of traveling 150 feet deep to capture still images and 1080i HD video.

POWER PLAY

Google's Nexus 7 ($199, play.google.com) takes everything we love about the slick Android operating system—the speed, the apps—and packs it into a seven-inch tablet with HD display, one gigabyte of RAM and enough battery life to keep us entertained through the worst flight delays.



LUXURY LISTEN

The most opulent headphones we've ever seen? The Audeze LCD3 ($1,945, audeze.com). With zebrawood ear cups, lambskin leather cushions and 6.17-square-inch planar magnetic drivers that deliver the best audio we've heard from a headphone, they're like a Ferrari for your ears.

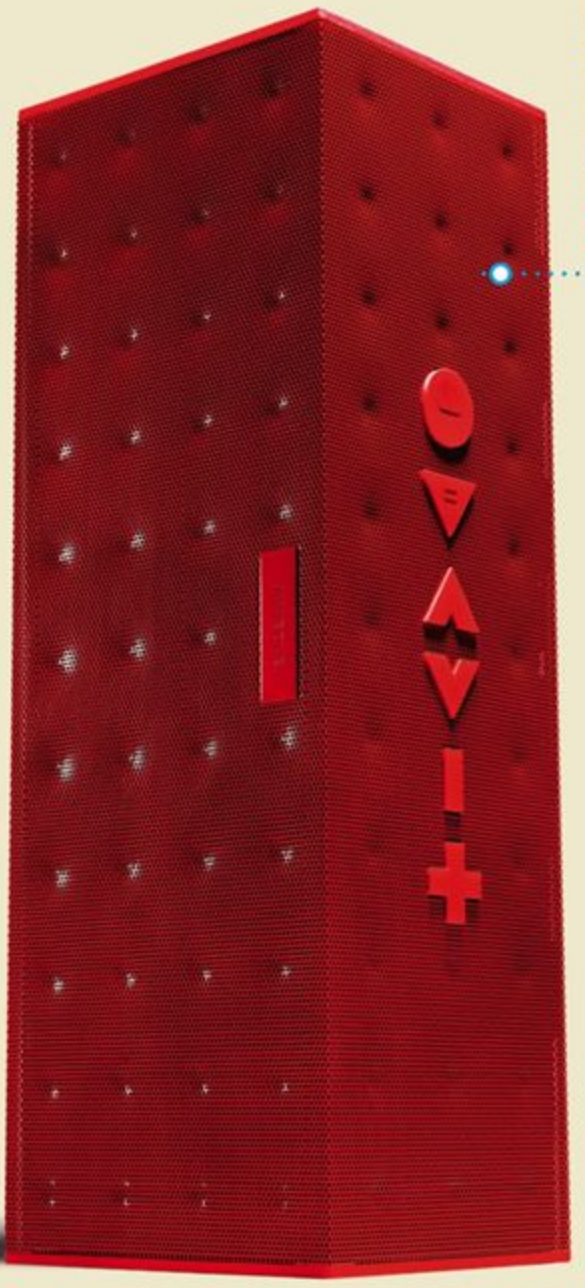
ACTION CAM

Built to withstand shock, water, dust and freezing temperatures, the JVC ADIXXION pocket-size camera ($349, jvc.com) can be mounted on a surfboard or helmet and uses Wi-Fi to instantly upload HD video of your next wild adventure, whether on the slopes or inside the ski lodge.

Photography by
JOSEPH SHIN

ROCK STATION

All that music on your cell phone wants to be free. Let it flow to the Jawbone Big Jambox ($299, jawbone.com), a wireless speaker that pumps out up to 15 hours of audio via Bluetooth. Connect several devices at once so everyone gets a chance to deejay. The Jambox can also double as a speakerphone when the police call to tell you to turn it down.



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BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS

FRANCOFILE

Talking With Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg

by James Franco

Seth Rogen is not just an actor. Teamed with his Canadian childhood friend Evan Goldberg, he's half of one of the most powerful screenwriting teams in Hollywood. The two have written such films as Superbad and Pineapple Express, and their most recent collaboration, The End of the World, stars a cast of comedy heavyweights including Jonah Hill, Danny McBride, Paul Rudd, Mindy Kaling, Jason Segel and PLAYBOY *Contributing Editor James Franco. Franco, who starred on the cult TV hit Freaks and Geeks with Rogen and worked with both men on Pineapple Express, chatted with his longtime colleagues.*

FRANCO: What were you guys like in high school? Was it hard for you to get girls?

ROGEN: Yeah, we did not get with girls in high school.

GOLDBERG: We did not do that well.

FRANCO: Were you into sports?

GOLDBERG: In Canada that doesn't matter.

ROGEN: In Canada athleticism does not transfer over the way it does in America.

FRANCO: What was your thing? Music? Wu-Tang?

GOLDBERG: I didn't really like rap or hip-hop in high school.

ROGEN: We weren't rap guys by any stretch of the imagination.

GOLDBERG: I liked rock and roll, Led Zeppelin and shit like that.

ROGEN: We were potheads. But Evan didn't smoke pot.

GOLDBERG: I only tried pot in 11th grade, I think.

FRANCO: Just pot? Nothing else?

GOLDBERG: No, we drank at a very young age.

ROGEN: Yeah, we were drunk a lot.

FRANCO: Was that because you were social misfits?

GOLDBERG: No, we did well with the social elements of high school. We had lots of friends and stuff.

ROGEN: Except in grade eight I got picked on, and grade nine.

GOLDBERG: You should have been picked on—you had dreadlocks.

ROGEN: I was an obnoxious kid with dreadlocks.

GOLDBERG: I'm amazed you didn't get the shit beat out of you.

FRANCO: Seth, you were cast on *Freaks and Geeks* in 1999.

ROGEN: Yeah, I was 16 when we shot the pilot.

FRANCO: I was there too. What I remember most is how much weed you would smoke.

ROGEN: I remember a few times you actually left because you were like, "I can't be around this much weed smoke. I've got to get out of here." Which I thought was funny.

FRANCO: What made you decide to try movies?

GOLDBERG: Even though *Superbad* was our big start, that's not our favorite type of movie. It's bad shit like *Mars Attacks!* When that came out, we were flipping out. We were so excited. We like movies that take balls and go for it, and involve something blowing up and some spaceships and aliens.

ROGEN: It's good if there is also an emotional story.

FRANCO: What movies were your biggest influences as filmmakers?

GOLDBERG: *The Princess Bride* and *Spaceballs* were two I enjoyed the most.

ROGEN: *Ghostbusters.* This movie we're working on with you, *The End of the World,* has kind of a *Ghostbusters*-ish vibe. That was always one of my favorite movies.

GOLDBERG: *Indiana Jones* really affected me as a kid.

ROGEN: Me too. We steal a few shots from Steven Spielberg in this movie. I always loved the *Back to the Future* movies. That was one of the best movies ever to meld a super-fucking-weird sci-fi element with the most normal emotional story you could imagine. It was helping a loser try to get a girl.

FRANCO: Now that you're both getting older—Seth, you're married, and Evan, you're getting married—do you think your movies will change?

ROGEN: I wouldn't write a movie about a bunch of high school kids at this age.

GOLDBERG: Or ever again.

ROGEN: It would feel weird. *The End of the World* is about us, so it's organically about people our age. But every movie we've written is about people our age, so I think we'll keep doing that. That being said, this movie's probably as bat-shit crazy and immature as any of our other movies, so I don't think that's going to stop.

GOLDBERG: Mostly it's too late for that. The genie's out of the bottle.

FRANCO: Some critics look down on bat-shit crazy. Does that concern you?

ROGEN: We don't think of the critics at all. We think of audiences, theaters full of people. And I think theaters full of people want shit that's totally original and completely bat-shit crazy. I ask myself what's going to get a big laugh. To me it's just the craziest stuff. I resent the stupid implication that to make something creatively satisfying only a few people can like it.

GOLDBERG: You know what that is? That's hipster mentality.

ROGEN: It is hipster bullshit. A movie is art that's for everybody. It's a piece of art that costs $10 to buy. A painting can cost millions of dollars. So to me it should be something that's crazy and that, hypothetically, everybody wants. I envy those artists who can literally paint three paintings a year and make as much money as I make in two weeks. They have to satisfy only three people, and they're making as much money as we make trying to satisfy hundreds of millions of people. I like making a lot of people happy.

FRANCO: You guys can look down on the hipster mentality all you want, but trust me, many people think *Superbad* is the hippest movie around.

ROGEN: But do hipsters even like that movie?

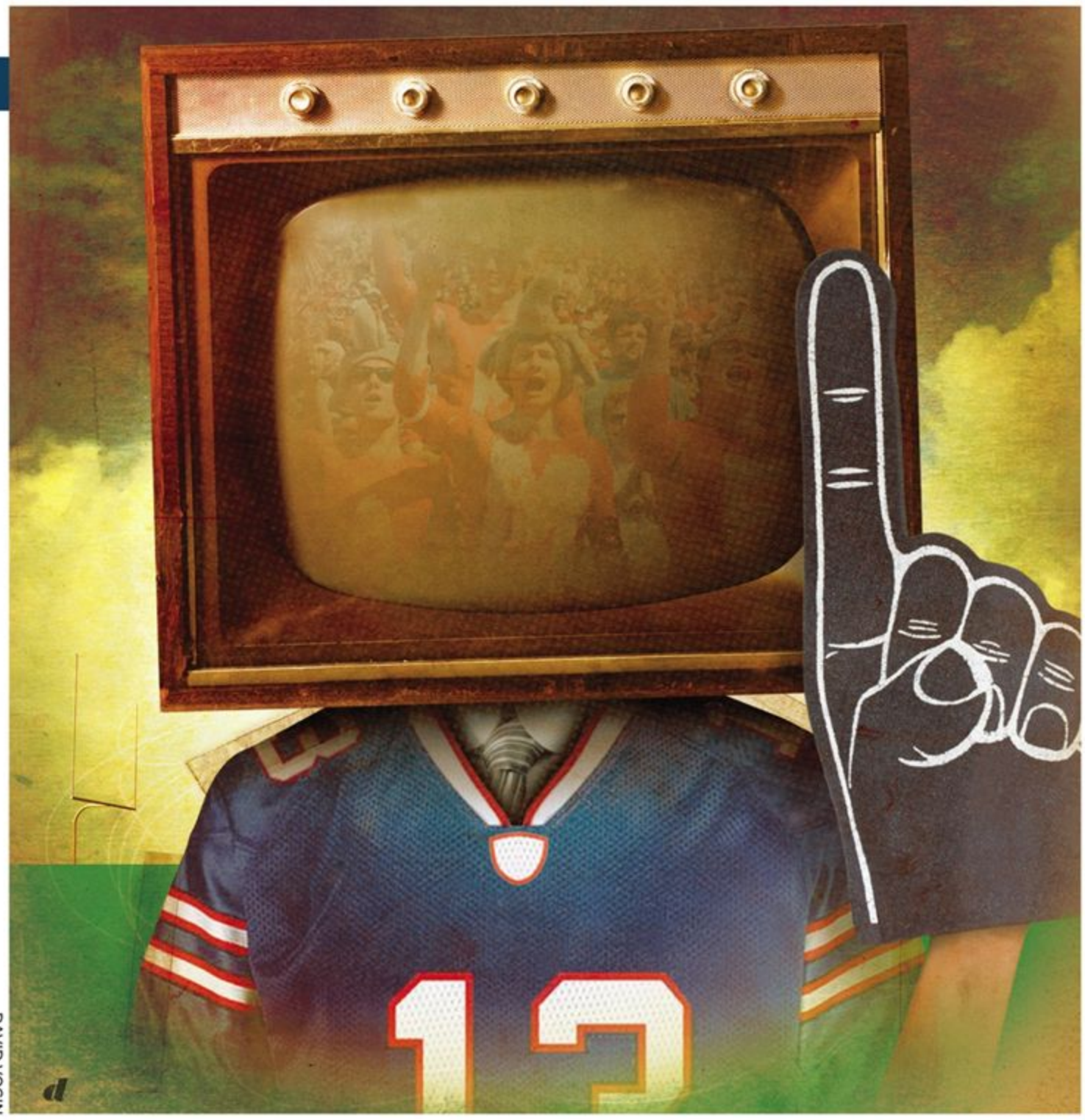
GOLDBERG: I don't know. I don't know what hipsters like. I don't really understand hipsters.

ROGEN: I don't understand that either. We probably are hipsters.

GOLDBERG: No, hipsters don't wear shorts.

ROGEN: Yeah, hipsters don't wear cargo shorts.

ILLUSTRATION BY RAÚL ALLÉN



DAVID VOGIN

I HATE FOOTBALL (PLEASE DON'T HIT ME)

BY JOEL STEIN

I like football. This is what I tell people. It took me nearly 40 years to figure out that my life would be much better if I said this.

And it's not entirely untrue. There are some things I like about the sport. I like that they play only once a week. I like that the season is only five months long. I like that tickets are so difficult to get that no one ever invites me. I like that the NFL doesn't have a team in L.A., where I live.

But I am expected to love all of it—to have a fantasy team, form opinions about rule changes and wear jerseys of my favorite players, despite the fact that I'm 40 and therefore a bit old for costumes. If I went to the supermarket dressed as Spider-Man or Luke Skywalker, people would avoid my aisle, but I push around a shopping cart wearing Aaron Rodgers's jersey and people think, That middle-aged guy enjoys pretending he's another man. Cool dude.

That's because you cannot be an American man and not like football. I'm not sure you can be an American woman at this point and not like football. Not liking football is the equivalent of saying you wish our country were still run by England, lost to the Nazis, became communist and then gave up our freedom to the terrorists.

You can hate hockey, find baseball boring, be too prissy for camping, call a handyman every time your toilet is clogged—but if you don't like football, your status as a man is suspect. Who decided that watching football is *the* activity that defines masculinity? After all, it's the only sport in which people celebrate by dancing. Not even 14-year-old girl gymnasts celebrate gold medals by dancing. In fact, not even contestants on *Dancing With the Stars* celebrate by dancing. Yet because I like to spend my Sundays outside, I'm considered less of a man. You know what's not manly? Staring at a guy blowing a whistle and tossing pieces of yellow fabric in the air. The main difference between a football ref and a guy on a float at a gay pride parade is the guy on the float smiles as he vogues.

What happened to horse racing and boxing? I hate those too, but at least I understand them. I have no idea what's going on in a football game. Most sports have rules I can understand: Don't touch the ball with your hands; bounce the ball if you're moving with it; any hot dog still in your mouth doesn't count as eaten. But there are more rules to football than there are in Sarbanes-Oxley. There are times when people miss the ball on purpose and the announcers say how brilliant the not-catching was. Other times they purposely kick the ball really badly and that too is considered brilliant. And the whole kicking part makes no sense at all. It's as if at various points in a hockey game a whole different group of guys came onto the ice and played Pictionary.

Americans always wonder why football hasn't become popular around the world. It's because, as George Will said, "Football combines the two worst things about America: It is violence punctuated by committee meetings." The only thing worse than seeing football on TV was the one time I actually went to a professional game. You know what other spectator sports occur in the winter? Indoor ones.

I have suffered for my rationality about football. I spent my freshman year of college suffering through the first half of Stanford games and then, when I couldn't take any more, walking alone through an empty campus, hearing the whole school cheering behind me as I read *The Epic of Gilgamesh* in my empty dorm. I have loitered by the tortilla chips at Super Bowl games, biding my time until the halftime show, when at least I could join in rooting for a crappy 1970s band to stay alive for the whole medley.

Since not liking football isn't an option, I decided to try one last time. I spent a Sunday in front of a giant wall of monitors at the NFL Network, watching games with the former pro players who do the on-air analysis. I tried to fit in, but Jamie Dukes, a giant man who played 10 seasons as an NFL lineman, critiqued my viewing as tepid. "Vicariously, you have to think you are that guy and you could do that. You have to emit that," he said. This is a lot to ask from a viewer. I don't even do that when I watch porn.

Exasperated, I asked Dukes what was wrong with me that I didn't grow up liking football. "Nothing. You had other things to do to broaden your mind," he said. I was not clear if Dukes was referring to Dungeons & Dragons or laser tag. "The question is then, What do you do to bond? This is the ultimate bonding event. Baseball is more regionalized. Look at this room. Are you going to see this cross section anywhere else?" He was right. There were black guys and white guys, guys from the sticks and the inner city, the world's greatest athletes and Rich Eisen. And for a moment I was jealous.

I do a lot of things I don't like to fit in. I don't really like beer. Or leaving my house. And I'm definitely not crazy about this monogamy thing. But by sharing a pitcher, going to parties and being married, I've gained a lot. I'm lucky to be American, and unfortunately, I don't get to pick just the parts of Americanness that I like. So this year, I'm watching football. And there have been moments I really liked. At least that's what I'm telling people.

GARY TAXALI

FORGET MONEY—

GET A JOB WITH SEX APPEAL

BY *Lisa Lampanelli*

When I first met Jimmy Big Balls, he owned a rock-and-roll club on Long Island. Truth be told, I didn't give a shit what he did for a living. He was a 47-year-old guy with no kids and a rare ocular disorder that made him see Kate Upton every time he looked at me. But let's face it, guys—most women care what you do for a living. And while some jobs ooze sexiness, other jobs—much like Chris Brown—just ooze loserness.

So what jobs are sexy to women? Sure, entertainers, pro athletes and politicians have always been able to close the deal. Yet there are some regular jobs that'll make her panties drop like the Greek stock market.

Let's start with firemen, cops and soldiers. We love them! Why? Because those guys can protect us. When push comes to shove, we love a man who can yank out his hose, fire his weapon or go Navy SEAL Team Six all over some evildoer's ass. Chances are, if a guy's willing to give up his life for us, we'll be willing to give *it* up to him.

Women also love men at the opposite end of the spectrum—those with what I call jerk-off jobs. These guys are poor musicians, artists, actors—men who make less money than the movie *Rock of Ages*—yet gals seem drawn to them. Not only will women date these losers-with-a-dream, but because of our nurturing instincts we'll do stuff we know we shouldn't. We'll pay for dinner, buy you a new guitar, even believe that you and that girl you were making out with were "rehearsing a scene."

The great thing about these jobs is that anyone can have them—no talent or degree required. Just stop washing your hair for a few weeks, look depressed, wear oddly shaped sunglasses and black T-shirts with sarcastic quotes on them and tell everyone you're working on a new album or graphic novel.

If you want a job where you don't need an ounce of game to get women, stick to Mom's favorite profession: doctor. Women meet a doctor and think, "Well, if he can heal the sick, maybe he can resuscitate my G-spot," and before you know it, the doctor is *in*.

There are, however, two exceptions to the doctor rule. The first is the proctologist. If a woman wants to be with someone who's around a bunch of turds all day, she'll hang out with Rob Kardashian. The second is the gynecologist. A gyno spends his day much like a newly single Johnny Depp—with his mug in dozens of women's privates. Your va-jay-jay shouldn't have to be the third prettiest your husband's seen since lunch.

If you're super secure in your masculinity, jobs that are typically held by gay men—hairdresser, florist, yoga instructor, designer—are great for getting laid. Why? First of all, most women will think you're gay, so their guard will be down. It's like a homosexual roofie. Second, your job is in a field that women are genuinely interested in, so you can talk to them for hours and work your metrosexual magic. If you're a straight man in fashion, you can literally pick out the dress you want to see rolled in a ball on your floor later that night.

Chefs are also sexy. A guy who can whip up something tasty in the kitchen will always be invited to whip out something tasty in the bedroom. That's because food is sexy. Gordon Ramsay isn't a chef; he's a freaking porn star. Make a woman a home-cooked meal, and by dessert she'll be calling you Gordon Rams-*me*.

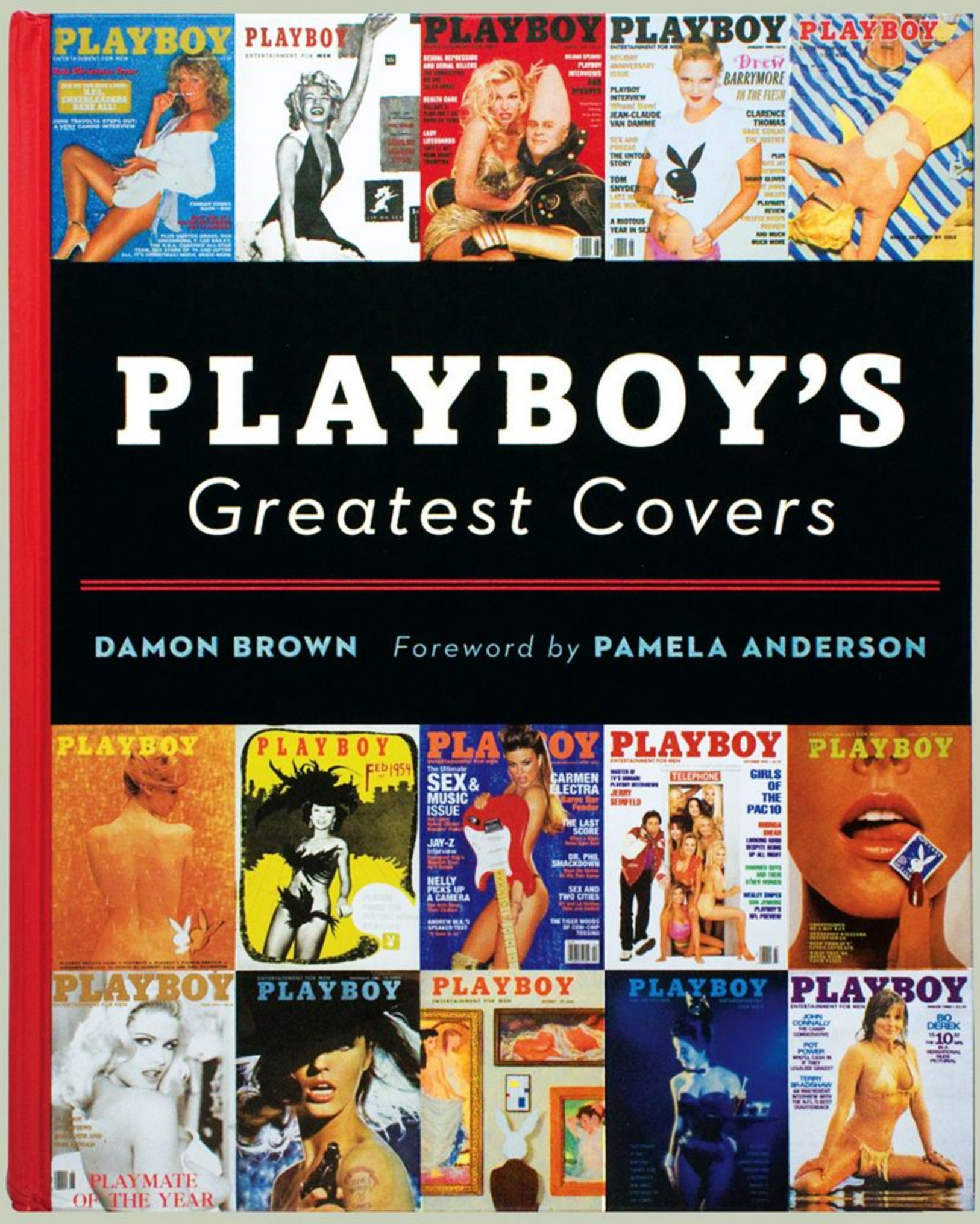
Now to the unsexy. What jobs will make her legs close up faster than a Confederate-flag shop in Harlem?

A huge, sad turnoff is the job of waiter at a theme restaurant. Don't misunderstand me: There's nothing wrong with a young guy waiting tables at B.J. Happygrunts to make ends meet while he plans his future. But if you're 35 years old and your work clothes include a pair of suspenders with dozens of buttons pinned to them, you won't get laid in a women's prison—even with a two-for-one appetizer special.

Though every guy salivates at the thought of nailing a porn actress, no woman is having the same thought about a porn actor. Ron Jeremy is the most famous male porn star in history, and he looks like a creepy overweight cop from New Jersey. Don't become a pizza deliveryman or a pool boy just because they get lucky in the movies. Life is not a porno flick. Women do not bang for free pizza, and the only pool boys getting laid are the ones who look like Matthew McConaughey—and trust me, you weren't voted the Sexiest Man Alive.

So hang in there, regular joes. Just because you're not a rapper or an NBA player doesn't mean you can't hit the lady lottery. After all, Julia Roberts, one of the richest and most beautiful women in the world, married a mere cameraman. Even my husband, Jimmy, elevated himself by marriage to the sexiest job of all: working for the country's hottest swimsuit model—me, a.k.a. Kate Upton. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to talk to TMZ and get my foot massage from Jimmy.

PLAYBOY'S GREATEST COVERS



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PLAYBOY ADVISOR

TOMER HANUKA

Whenever my husband gets his chain saw out, I get as excited as an undersexed teenager. I love the smell of fresh-cut wood mixed with gas and oil. Add that to my husband's smell, and it's on. I wish I could find a candle that smelled like that. I ask my husband to ravage me in the sawdust, but he thinks I'm joking. Does this make me a freak?—G.V., St. Louis, Missouri

No, but it makes you a bad candidate to be a lumberjack. We'd guess you aren't turned on as much by the sawdust as by the heat, power and danger involved in making the sawdust. That's why we expect you'd be disappointed having sex in the stuff. (Hay and sand are also overrated.) You can buy a sawdust-scented candle for the bedroom that might prove to be a suitable substitute—visit hotwicks.com, which also sells candles that smell like bacon, leather and beer. But for the real thing, you'll have to make the first move and show him you aren't kidding—after he's turned off the saw. (Do that for us.) The risk is that once he realizes how this affects you, there won't be a tree standing for miles.

About 35 years ago a girlfriend introduced me to a fragrance called Sandalwood by Alexander Shields. I visited Shields's men's store in New York a few times and even met him—a tall, thin, dignified older gentleman. After his store closed, I bought the cologne from him through the mail. Then suddenly it was no longer available. Can it be purchased anywhere? I still have a few precious drops.—D.V., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Would you sacrifice one of those drops for the good of mankind? If you can't find a discontinued cologne on eBay, you can have the scent recreated by Scentmatchers of Beverly Hills (scentmatchers.com, or 800-859-9878). It has a long list of discontinued products it has already revived. The list doesn't yet include Sandalwood, but if you provide a sample or describe the scent, the firm will do its best to match it. It can do this because even though the name, bottle design and process or formula for making a cologne or perfume can be trademarked or patented, the scent itself cannot be.

I had a party at my house, and one of my friends brought his new girlfriend, who is gorgeous. I served her a beer in a pint glass. When she finished, I noticed her lipstick had left an outline of her lower lip on the glass. As soon as everyone left, I began to masturbate while fantasizing about her. When I put her lip mark against the head of my penis, I immediately came into the glass. In my mind her lips made contact with my cock. I repeated this routine over the next month and sometimes got hard just staring at the glass. Is this behavior abnormal, and if so, what should I do?—N.G., Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Your reaction doesn't surprise us, and we'd guess it doesn't surprise many male readers either. Just talking to an attractive woman can bring on a fantasy that demands release, so imagine what her lips pressed against something you can later press against might do. We are concerned, however, that you are returning so often to this well. It's last call. Wash the glass before someone finds it under your bed. And remind us to drink beer from the bottle at your house.

I found my dad on a dating site for people into bondage, group sex and domination. If he were single, I would be more forgiving, but he's still married to my mom. I want to bust him but am unsure how to proceed. Is there a delicate way to handle this without my mother getting hurt? Is there a way to catch my dad in the act that won't end their marriage? I've suspected this for years but now have evidence.—J.R., Winter Park, Florida

Evidence of what? We understand your disappointment, but for all you know, your mother is aware of the ads and your father's taste for adventure and perhaps even enjoys the lifestyle herself. Even if that's not the case, the fact that you've been suspicious for years likely means she already knows. If it makes you feel better, tell your dad what you've seen. You don't know enough to accuse him of cheating—only that he advertises on the same kinky site you visit. Maybe it offers a family discount.

After years of reaching climax while exercising, only this week did I come across the term *coregasm*. I remember having to drop to the floor while doing a flex-arm hang in elementary school PE because I started to have an orgasm. At the time, I thought I was going to pee my pants—it was only after I became sexually active that I realized what was happening. Once I understood, I began ending my workouts with hanging leg raises as a treat. How and why does this happen? Is it common? Unfortunately, engaging these core muscles is the only way I can get off, even during oral sex. I have to flex and hold tension for an extended time or clitoral stimulation is useless and annoying. It doesn't seem fair that I can climax at the gym but not with my partner.—A.B., Honolulu, Hawaii

If coregasms were common, a third of Americans wouldn't be obese. Although it's not clear what triggers exercise-induced sexual arousal and/or climax (which occurs even without erotic thoughts), you are far from alone. Alfred Kinsey noted the phenomenon as early as 1953, and more recently, researchers at Indiana University needed only five weeks to find 370 women who had experienced it. Their study, published in March, included 124 women who had experienced exercise-induced orgasms and 246 who had become aroused short of climax. The most common sexercises were crunches, followed by weight lifting, yoga, bicycling/spinning, running and walking/hiking. Many women mentioned something similar to your "treat"—commonly called the captain's chair—in which you hold handles while bending your knees to lift your feet. No one is sure what triggers orgasms at the gym, but it's not unusual for a woman to need to tense (and even hold her breath) to reach climax during sex. In fact, muscle tension is part of orgasm; it's just usually involuntary, and it's probably designed to increase blood flow to the genitals. We say, what's the rush? If you tense up but don't come, relax and enjoy the sounds of the swirling finger or vibe on your lubed clit until you're ready for another approach.

My father is a longtime Jack Daniel's drinker, and I thought a barrel of it would be a great gift for him. Is it possible to buy a barrel, and how much would it cost?—J.D., Colorado Springs, Colorado

You can buy a barrel, though only of the aptly named Single Barrel. (No. 7 and other

varieties are blended from the contents of multiple barrels.) It will cost you about $10,000. Phone Jack Daniel's at 888-551-5225 to inquire. Each barrel yields about 240 bottles. You can visit the distillery in Lynchburg, Tennessee to select your own, or ask the master distiller to decide. About eight weeks later, when the barrel is ready, its contents will be bottled and the bottles and empty barrel shipped to a retailer near you for pickup.

I am taking my girlfriend to Rome with my family. She invited her best girlfriend, with whom we enjoyed an extremely pleasurable threesome about a year ago. The friend, who now has a boyfriend, asked to share a room with us during the trip. Is that appropriate? If so, should we refrain from having sex when she's there, even if she doesn't participate?—A.F., Little Rock, Arkansas

You should have sex while she's in the room only if she's in the sex. Otherwise you may provide temptation for something she doesn't have permission to do. Sharing a room is probably unwise, but because you'll be a world away from home, drinking and relaxed, we would bet another ménage à trois occurs even if your friend stays in a different room. If her boyfriend isn't cool with that, it's a shame to assist in making him a cuckold. But we're torn. Although we have high standards regarding deception, we have regrettably low ones when it comes to turning down threesomes. Cogli l'attimo.

My father left me a valuable ring with the understanding that it would be passed to my son, then his son, etc., to keep it with the family name. However, my son has only a daughter. Since money is tight, is it unreasonable for me to sell the ring and split the funds among myself and my children?—R.R., New York, New York

It's your ring, so it's yours to sell, and the proceeds are yours to distribute as you see fit. Your father would understand. If you find another way and it does pass to your son, we see no reason your granddaughter couldn't inherit it. She also has the family name.

Years ago I dated a woman who loved giving head and said she could tell what I had eaten by the flavor of my come. She also insisted on dipsticking her pussy with her finger after we fucked and analyzing that. Her accuracy was uncanny. I thought it was strange at the time but never questioned her. (My need to nut superseded my need to know.) I was wondering if this has any basis in science.—B.R., Denver, Colorado

Why not sample it yourself after a meal of pineapple and asparagus? Many women have written over the years to assure us they have amazing powers of seminal detection. (In fact, scientists have found some people are "supertasters," which might explain it.) But we suspect for most people semen tastes like semen. We are often pitched products that purport to resolve the "problem" of ejaculate, but we've yet to hear from a man whose life has changed as a result. The latest are oral strips designed to hide the taste of semen, which we find a bit discouraging. Ejaculate is not something to savor, perhaps, but it's part of our modus operandi. Love us, love our semen. Plus, any guy who paused to use a product that would mask the taste of his partner before he went down on her would get smacked.

I was watching a baseball game at a sports bar and went to the restroom. There were three urinals—two on one wall with televisions overhead and a third opposite with no TV. A guy was at one of the two TV urinals, which had no divider. I know you're supposed to leave a one-urinal buffer, but the commercial break was ending and I didn't want to miss any of the game. In this situation is it okay to ignore the buffer rule?—V.P., East Brunswick, New Jersey

Michael Sykes, who in 1995 founded the International Center for Bathroom Etiquette (icbe.org), tells us the buffer rule is suspended during live or televised sporting events.

I'm a gay man who has had crushes on straight friends before, but now I'm hung up on one guy in particular. We're growing close and he deserves my honesty. How do I broach the subject without blurting out "I love you"? If I reveal this, will a friendship be possible?—M.H., Denver, Colorado

Hard to say. Tell him you find him attractive. He's a big boy; he can handle it.

In June a reader wrote to express his disappointment that he has only one mouth and so can suck only one of his wife's nipples at a time. If your partner is on top or on her side next to you, you can often push her breasts together enough to get both nipples in your mouth. It drives my girlfriend crazy. She's a 40F, but I've managed this on women with smaller breasts.—B.M., Patchogue, New York

Thanks for the tip—though we have to believe most women would be thinking, as their boobs were crushed together, What's in this for me?

What is the proper etiquette for changing a diaper when visiting someone's home? I walked into my home office to find my sister-in-law changing my niece's diaper on top of my desk. She looked up in surprise and said, "Is it okay to change her here? It's just a wet one."—L.C., Indianapolis, Indiana

We're familiar with the rules of changing diapers only on adult babies (part of the job). Although that was a terrible place for a pit stop—your sister-in-law knew it, but parents work in 30-second bursts and never plan on getting caught—your response might have been, "Do you need some help? Let me find you a better place to change her."

This has happened to me only once, and I'm wondering if I imagined it. While I was having sex with a girlfriend, we both reached climax at the same time, and it felt as though her cervix reached out, enveloped the head of my penis and sucked in one quick stroke. I was shocked. Has anything like this been documented?—L.H., Yellow Springs, Ohio

It has now. During climax, a woman's pelvic floor and vaginal muscles contract. The uterus also contracts rhythmically, which some scientists hypothesize creates an "in-suck" effect that ostensibly pulls in sperm. What you felt may have been the jaws of life.

What is the best way to muddle mint?—K.L., St. Louis, Missouri

Don't go crazy. Jamie Boudreau, host of Raising the Bar (smallscreennetwork.com), says most people apply the muddler too enthusiastically to the bottom of the glass, crushing the leaves and releasing the chlorophyll in their veins. That usually makes the drink too bitter. Instead, give the leaves one good press to activate their oils. Better yet, don't bother with the muddler. Boudreau just puts the leaves in one palm and smacks his other hand against them. That's enough, he says, to "wake them up" for the balance you're after.

My wife and I are on the brink of divorce. During the week she rarely arrives home before six P.M. and then heads to the computer to log on to Facebook. If we watch a movie, she's busy texting, and at dinner it's the same thing. When I complain, she says I have to share her and am being "possessive." All I want is for her to want to be with me. What should I do?—J.F., Detroit, Michigan

Your marriage has a communication problem—your wife is communicating with everyone but you. Don't underestimate the power of social media to fuck with your marriage; a survey of 5,000 divorce petitions in the U.K. found a third mentioned Facebook. Tell your wife you understand the need to share but you miss her. Suggest she at least agree to a "screen-free" dinner—no computer, phone or TV. This may sound counterintuitive, but if you haven't already, friend her on Facebook (let's hope she accepts). We don't mean to say you should talk to your wife through the internet, but she's sharing her life there. Like any friend, post comments, encouragement, quips. At the same time, what you learn about her interests may surprise you, and like any good conversationalist, you can use the information to ask questions in a way that gets her to put down her phone. Good luck.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereos and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most interesting, pertinent questions will be presented in these pages. Write the Playboy Advisor, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or e-mail advisor@playboy.com. For updates, follow @playboyadvisor on Twitter.

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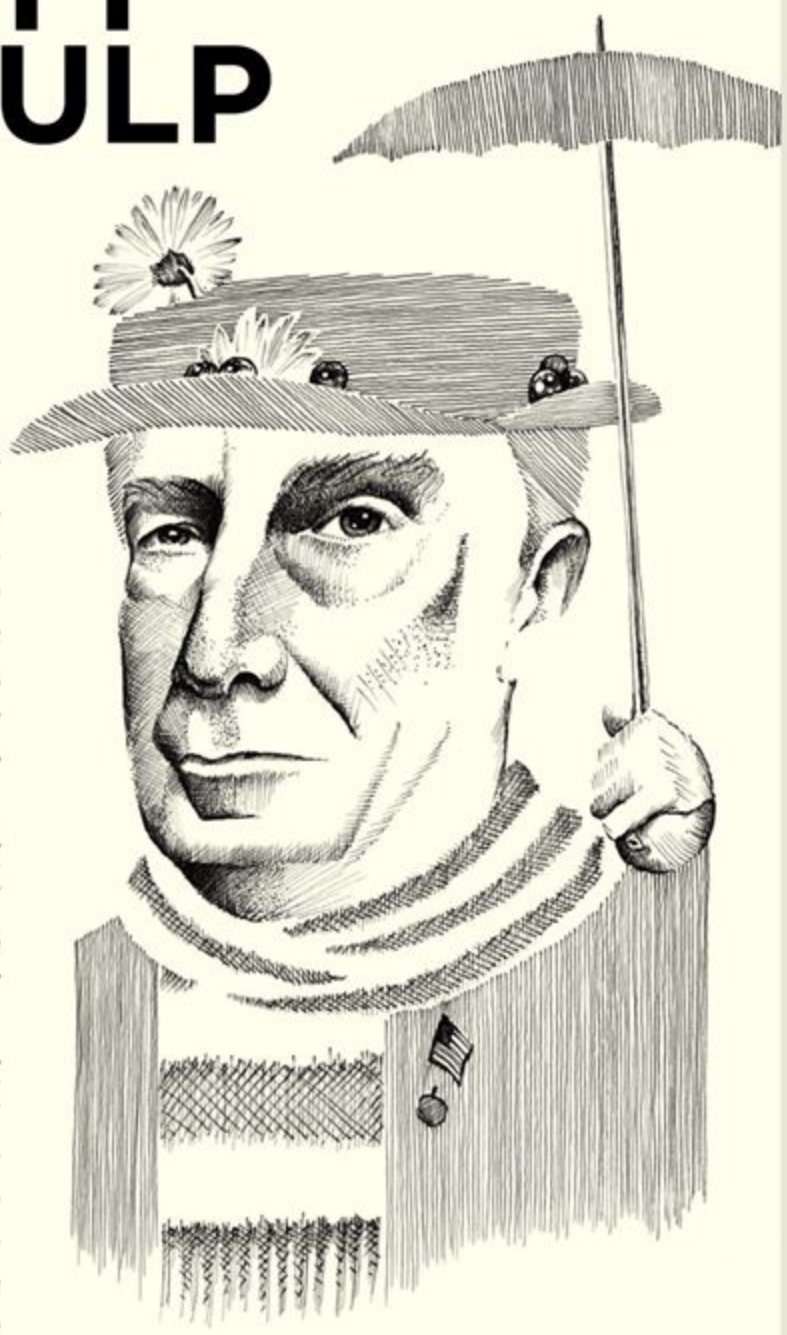
MA

HANDS OFF MY BIG GULP

The nanny state can't tell us what to drink

BY MELBA NEWSOME



On July 9, a hundred people gathered at City Hall Park in lower Manhattan for the Million Big Gulp March. They were there to protest Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposal to limit the size of sugary drinks. Queens City Council member Dan Halloran was a featured speaker. He accused Bloomberg of challenging the principles on which our country was founded. "Your individual rights don't end when you walk out your front door," Halloran told the crowd.

On July 24 Halloran was among those who gathered in front of the New York Board of Health for a public hearing on the soda war. Health Commissioner Thomas Farley began by pointing out there was no proposal to take away anyone's soda, only to limit the size of containers. But for opponents like Halloran, this is a distinction without a difference. "When they came for the cigarettes, I didn't say anything, because I didn't smoke," said Halloran during his testimony. "When they came for the MSG, I didn't say anything because I don't eat it very often. Well, today it's your soda." Such language is over-the-top, but so is Bloomberg's proposal: If a sugary drink has 25 calories or more per eight ounces, then bars, restaurants, movie theaters, arenas, food carts and delis must limit their serving size to 16 ounces. Violators are subject to a $200 fine.

If we learned anything from Prohibition and the drug war, it's that banned substances become more desirable.

It is appropriate that governments try to improve public health, but it isn't appropriate when they interfere with individual autonomy. To paraphrase libertarian Jacob Hornberger, if you are not free to make a bad, irresponsible choice, are you really free? C.S. Lewis writes, "Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. Those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience."

If there were ever any doubt about Bloomberg's autocracy, it should have been removed in 2008 when he abolished the city's term-limits law so he could seek a third term as mayor. He reasoned that his continued leadership was necessary because of the financial crisis. Bloomberg is a typical CEO, who is accustomed to

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JUSTIN PAGE

READER RESPONSE

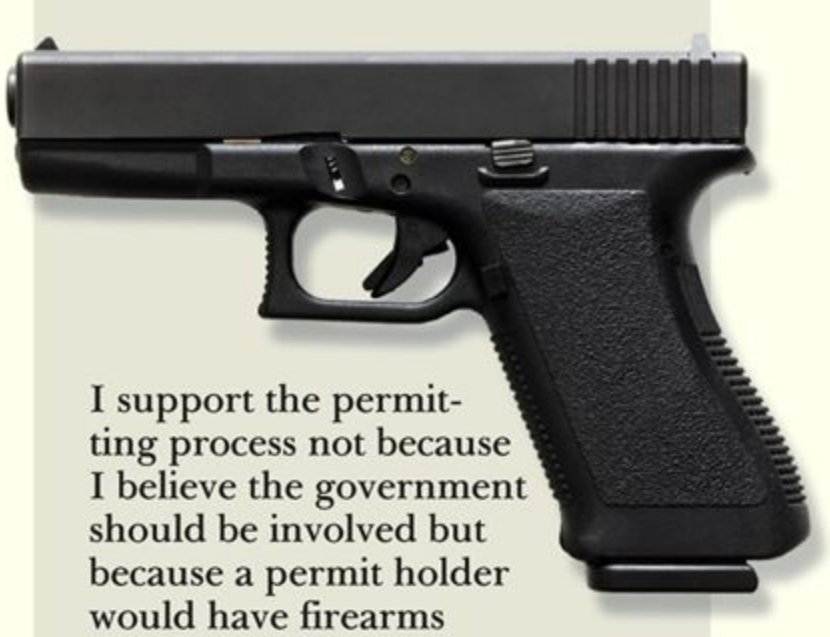
FIRING LINE

After reading Pat Jordan's report on open-carry laws (*Armed and Dangerous?*, June), I better understand why they call themselves "gun nuts." The cartoon on the final page of the article, of a boss preparing to "downsize" his staff with an assault rifle, creates a nice juxtaposition.

Nelson Ames
Hamilton, New Jersey

The need for a state militia referenced in the Second Amendment has been filled by the National Guard and Coast Guard, so the only reason for a citizen to own a firearm is for hunting or for defense during a home invasion. In either case, a handgun, shotgun or rifle is more than adequate. Accordingly, all handguns, shotguns and rifles should be licensed and registered so weapons can be matched to owners at the click of a mouse.

Joe Bialek
Cleveland, Ohio



I support the permitting process not because I believe the government should be involved but because a permit holder would have firearms instruction. I feel much better in public places if there are a few open-carry folks in the mix.

Mike Kuzara
Wyarno, Wyoming

issuing edicts to his subjects because he knows what's best for them. His latest paternalistic effort is no different. He has been on a decade-long crusade to improve the health of New Yorkers—whether they like it or not—prompting his detractors to dub him Nanny Bloomberg.

New York passed its first anti-tobacco ordinance in 1988, banning smoking in public restrooms and taxicabs. In 2002, Bloomberg's first year in office, he outlawed smoking in restaurants and bars. Smoking is now barred in most of the city's outdoor spaces, including parks, beaches and pedestrian plazas.

Bloomberg first tackled diets in 2003 by forbidding the sale of sodas and candy from vending machines in schools. Next came the prohibition of trans fats in restaurants and prepared foods. In 2008 the city required restaurant chains to post calorie counts on fast-food menus. While those measures encroached on an individual's right to pollute his or her own body, none of them earned as much ire as Bloomberg's proposal to limit the size of sodas.

When government starts to ban things it deems bad for us, it is protecting us from our own choices.

AT THE MILLION BIG GULP MARCH IN NEW YORK: WHITHER THE RIGHT TO MAKE ONE'S OWN DECISIONS?

In January, the mayor launched an Obesity Task Force in response to statistics that indicated 58 percent of New Yorkers were obese or overweight—including nearly 40 percent of children. The mayor says New York City spends $4 billion a year to treat obesity-related diseases. "We have an obligation to warn you when things aren't good for your health," Bloomberg said. "If you have to take it in a smaller glass, you have to make a conscious decision to have another cup of it. We think a lot of people won't, and that will reduce one of the contributors to the obesity epidemic."

Warning Americans about the costs of their actions is one thing. But when government starts to ban things it deems bad for us, it is protecting us from our own choices. According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 35 percent of U.S. adults and 17 percent of youths are obese. Some of the most debilitating diseases—such as heart disease, diabetes and hypertension—are directly linked to obesity. People who regularly drink soda are more likely to be overweight, and those who increase their soda intake have a greater chance of becoming obese.

While we all pay for obesity in terms of health care and insurance costs, it is crucial to find a balance between public health and freedom. Research conducted by Brian Elbel, assistant professor of medicine and health policy at New York University's School of Medicine, suggests soda gets more blame than it deserves. Soft-drink makers claim their products account for only seven percent of an average American's diet. In an article published in *The New England Journal of Medicine,* Elbel determined the average consumer would take in 63 fewer calories per trip to a fast-food restaurant under Bloomberg's proposal. Are we really to believe cutting 63 calories is worth the government intrusion?

READER RESPONSE

Jordan's article is fair and informative until the line "If blacks carried openly in south L.A. or Harlem, cops would immediately perceive them as a threat and throw them in the slammer, no questions asked." Although

residents of New York, Los Angeles and Chicago probably have the most need to carry, the reality is that it's illegal for them to do so. It's an example of how gun control can disproportionately impede one group, while freedom lifts the yoke from all citizens.

Mike Butler
Killingworth, Connecticut

BLACK AND WHITE
Ishmael Reed claims the Tea Party is "a movement energized by its resentment toward a black president" ("Give 'Em Hell, Barry," July/August). So the $5 trillion increase in the national debt in the past four years has nothing to do with it?

Darrell Burk
Newport News, Virginia

Reed praises President Obama as a race healer, yet millions of people voted for him because of his skin color.

Joey Ford
St. Petersburg, Florida

Bloomberg cited research by Brian Wansink and David Just of Cornell University to bolster his case. Wansink and Just have researched the effects of packaging and serving size on eating habits. As director of Cornell's Food and Brand Lab, Wansink found that using a 10-inch plate instead of a 12-inch plate can lead to a person's consuming 22 percent fewer calories. He has also been credited with the development of 100-calorie packs and the Small Plate Movement. But Wansink and Just say their work doesn't support Bloomberg's latest diktat. Not only do they believe the soda limitation will have no impact on curbing obesity, they indicate it may have the opposite effect, since consumers rebel against such limitations. Their experiments found that subjects ate the portions they were given—large or small—in a dining or party setting, where they were unlikely to notice portion size. However, when people walk into a theater and order the 64-ounce Super-Duper Thirst Quencher, they are aware of what they are ordering. They will probably resent any efforts to intervene.

We have seen how the prevalence of no- and low-fat products has backfired. Since these foods were introduced to the market, Americans have become fatter. We now consume 200 to 300 more calories per day compared with 30 years ago. People who eat low-fat or reduced-calorie meals tend to consume more calories overall, because they splurge on snacks and desserts.

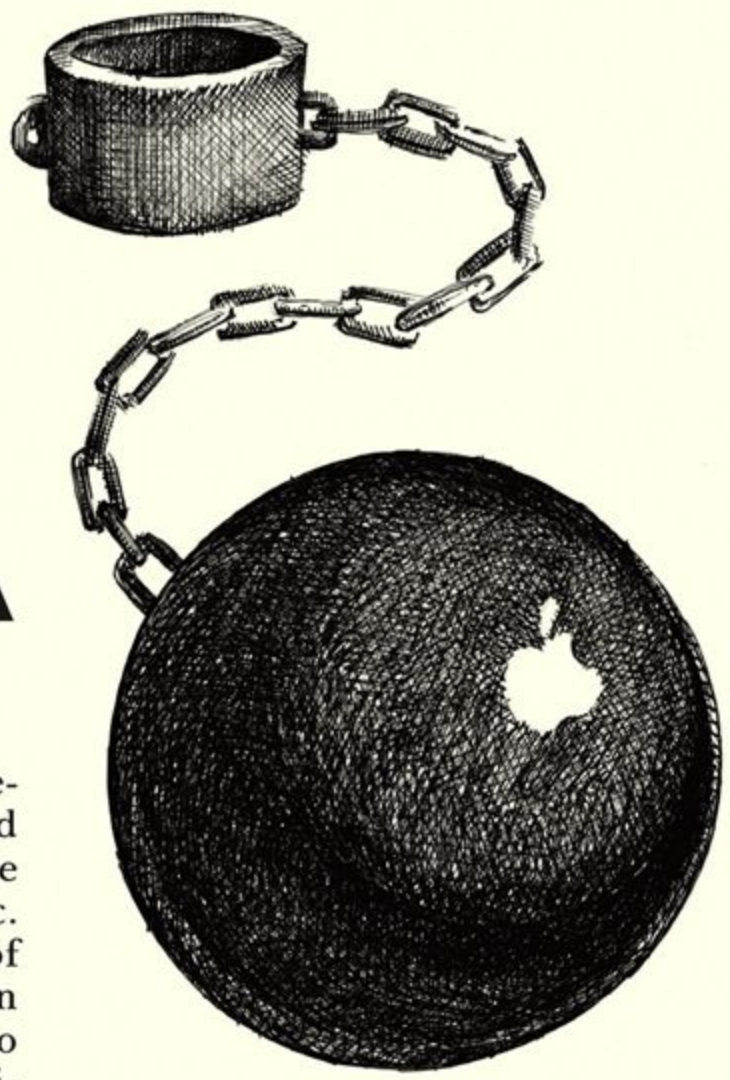
If we learned anything from Prohibition and the drug war, it's that banned substances become more desirable. Instead of issuing fiats that encroach on personal liberties, we should try a public-information campaign about the health effects of sugary drinks. Convincing restaurants and manufacturers to reduce portion and package sizes would have an impact on the number of calories we consume while leaving the ultimate choice to the consumer.

Mayor Bloomberg probably won't let New Yorkers make their own choices. The New York City Board of Health is scheduled to vote on his proposal in September. Since the mayor appointed its members, there is little doubt as to the outcome. As early as March 2013, city residents will likely find their personal choices curtailed. ■

Our Corporate Masters

HOW APPLE RULES AMERICA

BY BRIAN COOK



Corporations rule by being above and beyond the laws that govern the rest of us. Apple Inc. has become a symbol of what remains great about American capitalism: a technological dynamo that, through the ingenuity of its visionary founders, has changed the way we live. But the tech revolution has coincided with another one—a new model of political economy in which corporate profits reach all-time highs while wages stagnate and inequality increases. Apple, it turns out, is a pretty good symbol of that revolution as well.

Conditions at the Foxconn factories in Shenzhen, China that manufacture Apple's products have been notoriously poor. Workers there complained to outside auditors about routine 60-hour workweeks, dangerous working environments (with more than 700 industrial accidents recorded at Shenzhen) and low wages. How low were those wages? According to an April analysis by Isaac Shapiro from the Economic Policy Institute, 95,000 Foxconn workers who made Apple products likely received about $441 million in total last year, or about $4,600 each. That total is about the same amount Apple paid its nine-member executive board in 2011. Of course, even on the board, the gains were uneven, with $376 million going to new CEO Tim Cook in a one-time stock grant. But don't feel bad for the other board members. This year, six have received nearly $60 million each in stock grants; another has thus far had to make do with $40 million.

Perhaps those gigantic stock options are why Apple is screwing over not only its Chinese workforce but

READER RESPONSE

ANOTHER VIEW

I agree with Dale Clark's observation about the resemblance of the *Laughing Christ* image

to President Obama (*Reader Response,* July/August). But he bears a more striking resemblance to that famous photo of Benito Mussolini sticking his chin out. All Obama needs is the goofy hat.

Roy Preston
Lusby, Maryland

RUDE AWAKENING

Taffy Brodesser-Akner has gathered a limited amount of data and come up with a conclusion that is well thought-out, logical, relevant...and half wrong ("Vexed Americana," July/August). She may be correct that we have become a "nation of haters" as far as anonymous internet commentary is concerned. But the meanness she encounters in life is not the same animal and does not have

its American workers as well. Apple cultivates the image of its retail employees as Geniuses, but according to a *New York Times* report it pays them only slightly better than village idiots, with many making $25,000 a year, or about $12 an hour. That is now changing, with Apple (surely coincidentally) announcing just days before the *Times* story appeared that it would raise the salary of its store employees by 25 percent. Even with the pay hike, the wages of Geniuses will still be only slightly above the 20th percentile of all college graduates.

WORKERS AT A FOXCONN TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP IN CHINA PROVIDE CHEAP LABOR FOR APPLE PRODUCTS.

Apple's indifference to the well-being of its American employees should surprise no one, given the contempt it shows for its countrymen by avoiding billions in taxes each year. As reported in *The New York Times,* the company has avoided paying cash-starved California millions by opening a front office in Nevada. Apple is also a pioneer in finding ways to funnel 70 percent of its profits through countries with lower tax rates, including Ireland, Luxembourg and the Virgin Islands. That means Apple had an effective tax rate of under 10 percent in 2011, less than half the 24 percent tax rate paid by Walmart. ■

READER RESPONSE

the same cause. It is clear she lives in or near a large city on the overpopulated East Coast. She should visit a small town in the West or Midwest—or even Connecticut or upstate New York. Lousy driving may still earn a one-fingered salute, but a smile and a gesture of courtesy receive a smile and a wave in return.

Fred Waiss
Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin

Brodesser-Akner's essay hits home. I've been wondering why everyone seems so mean. For example, it's notable how infrequently drivers wave when you let them into traffic. My instinctive response is to mutter "Screw you," but PLAYBOY has inspired me to start the Nice Movement on Facebook. Clearly PLAYBOY should be the official magazine of the Nice Movement, because what is nicer than beautiful women and smart ideas?

Carol Valentic
Shelby Township, Michigan

If you could help more nice guys get laid, we'd be grateful.

A PARTY OF PIRATES

How a new technology begat a promising political force

BY JOSH KRON

The balance of power between a state and its citizens rests on who controls access to communication and information. The advent of the printing press placed an unprecedented share of control over the world's knowledge into the hands of the public—a shift that resulted in the Enlightenment, the birth of democracy and the scientific revolution. Over the past 20 years, the internet has done much to redefine society's rules of engagement. It played a central role in last year's revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia. It struck blows to Hollywood and the Pentagon, and it dissolved mainstream media's monopoly on the American mind.

America's rulers—"politicians, corporate executives and owners of press and television," according to historian Howard Zinn—have historically scrambled to assert control over new technologies. Out of such struggles, political movements arise: This is how labor unions, the Anti-Rent movement and Teddy Roosevelt's Progressive Party of 1912 all emerged.

Change may be coming again. In Europe, the Pirate Party—founded by computer geeks reacting to governmental efforts to restrict the internet—has altered Germany's political landscape.

Starting with a platform of internet freedom and sweeping copyright reform, the Pirate Party has become more than an online party. It is a party for getting the most out of the internet's tools and cyberspace's physics to advance direct democracy and citizen

power via data specs, privacy controls and digital transparency. "Mainstream politics is 20 years behind society," says Christof Leng, a founding member of Germany's Pirate Party. (Leng has since gone on to pursue his Ph.D.) "We bring our own culture. Call it nerd, call it internet, call it youth. We don't want to play their game. We make our own."

Leng never planned to start a party. He had read about Swedish hacker-activists who ran an illegal file-sharing site called the Pirate Bay and others who created a party to represent their concerns in Sweden. Looking online for a German Pirate Party, Leng came across a near-empty forum.

"I just joined discussions, and then others trickled in," Leng says. Swedish police had recently raided the Pirate Bay grounds, duct-taping security cameras and confiscating servers. "It was a wake-up call for a lot of us," says Leng. "We thought, Let's try founding a party," he says. "If it goes wrong, it will at least be interesting. If we succeed, we can change the game."

They have succeeded. Not only has the party become Germany's protest party—attracting voters with social-welfare and drug-reform measures—but chapters have opened across the globe, with members winning seats in Austria, the Czech Republic, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Those who have grown up with computers are a universal constituency.

THE PIRATE PARTY HAS EMERGED AS THE DE FACTO PROTEST MOVEMENT IN GERMANY.

A Pirate Party chapter was founded in the U.S. in 2006. "We are not on the right, and we are not on the left," says Travis McCrea, chairman of the U.S. Pirate Party. "We are in front." This country may be the movement's crucible—ours is a society at the center of an emerging civil rights struggle.

With more than 245 million internet users in the United States (including roughly 150 million with Facebook accounts), online data are highly prized. A 2011 bill, the Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act, seeks to allow the extraction of users' personal data from private companies and ISPs for intelligence agencies, potentially obstructing websites that publish unauthorized information. On the entertainment side, in an unabashed display of corporate hegemony, the leading American ISPs—Cablevision, Comcast, Time Warner—also provide much of our media content. This year, in a bid to restrict illegal file sharing and copyright infringement, these corporations announced they would start monitoring web traffic—and they have the power to block internet access if they catch you misbehaving.

The U.S. is a society at the center of an emerging civil rights struggle.

Proposed laws under congressional review, including the 2011 Stop Online Piracy Act and 2011 Protect IP Act, would further restrict renegade uploaders.

One of the internet's great emancipations is its ability to replicate data infinitely and freely. It has led to the greatest amalgamation of knowledge in human history, published on Wikipedia. Germany's Pirate Party argues in its manifesto that selling digitally protected files creates "artificial scarcity" of a "public good" for private economic gain and is "immoral."

America is not the most democratic of places. Of the many third-party political groups in the U.S., just three have more than 100,000 members. The Pirate Party, with only several hundred, faces major hurdles.

However it performs, the Pirates' emergence kicks off a new era in American society. As our lives migrate online, niche tech issues from network neutrality to IP anonymity will become mainstream civil liberty battles over our First, Fourth and Ninth Amendment rights.

"They've picked up on something," says Adrian Johns, professor of the history of science at the University of Chicago, about the Pirate Party. "It is going to end up being a bit like green issues in the 1980s and 1990s, when Green parties were rising everywhere. They will bring up issues that affect the everyday life of normal citizens. And civil liberties will be the language in which they are addressed." ■

READER RESPONSE

GAY MARRIAGE

In commenting on a letter in the June issue (*Dear Playboy*), you smugly pronounce, "Supporting same-sex marriage became middle-of-the-road about five years ago." By what measure do you pompously judge something "middle-of-the-road"? The way things are going with the sexual revolution, which PLAYBOY reminds us ad nauseam it started some six decades ago, it won't be long before bigamy is proclaimed legal and the insane liberal court system approves marriages between people and their dogs.

Tilman Grubbs
Larkspur, California

And you'll be able to marry your own mother, and civilization will collapse, etc., etc....

A reader argues in June that "gay marriage is a mockery of natural law." In fact, homosexual behavior has been observed in more than 1,500 species, and Oslo's Natural History Museum created an entire exhibit devoted to "gay" animals. Another reader in the same issue quotes Stephen Colbert as saying, "Facts tend to have a liberal bias." Amen to that.

Greg Ingram
Phoenix, Arizona

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THE MASTER

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PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN

AMY ADAMS

This 2012 *Fall*

A
ANNAPURNA PICTURES

R RESTRICTED
SEXUAL CONTENT, GRAPHIC NUDITY AND LANGUAGE

THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: LEE CHILD

A candid conversation with the creator of the best-selling Jack Reacher novels about reinventing yourself at 40, Tom Cruise's height and the joys of weed

When game six of the 2011 World Series was rained out, Tony La Russa, the then manager of the National League champion St. Louis Cardinals, texted Lee Child to say he was thrilled to get the night off. He had just bought the author's latest Jack Reacher novel, and now he could start reading. Like former president Bill Clinton, who sends Child a handwritten mash note after finishing every book, and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who has reviewed several favorably for Amazon.com, La Russa can't get enough of Reacher, the six-foot-five ex–military police major who over the course of 17 novels has outthought and outfought an array of cold-blooded villains. Known as Reacher Creatures, Child's fans are legion. His books, which have been translated into 40 languages, have sold more than 60 million copies and consistently garner splendid notices. Janet Maslin of The New York Times calls Child "the best thriller writer of the moment."

The stakes are about to get higher. Not only has a new Reacher novel, A Wanted Man, just been published, but in December Paramount Pictures will release Jack Reacher, starring Tom Cruise. The casting of the five-foot-seven actor as the larger-than-life Reacher has, not surprisingly, generated controversy. On a Facebook page dedicated to the topic, one reader grouses, "I guess it could have been worse: Justin Bieber, Andy Dick." Declares another, "Child sold out." Directed by Oscar winner Christopher McQuarrie (who wrote The Usual Suspects) and co-starring Rosamund Pike and Robert Duvall, the movie is based on One Shot, Child's ninth novel. It pits Reacher against a group of thugs who are menacing a Midwestern town. The studio hopes it will be the first in a film franchise that will transform Jack Reacher into another Jason Bourne or Dirty Harry.

It is remarkable that the 57-year-old Child finds himself both atop best-seller lists and poised for a Hollywood ending, considering that he didn't start writing until the age of 40 after being dismissed from a high-profile job in English television. (Born James Grant, he changed his name when he launched his new career.) More remarkable still is that the native Briton has created an indelibly American hero, one part Shane, one part Philip Marlowe and one part Rambo—if Rambo were a liberal. His military days behind him, Reacher roams the country, lingering in places just long enough to uncover wrongdoing and dispense rough justice before drifting on, typically by bus. His life is so stripped down he doesn't own a change of clothes. (When his shirts and pants get dirty, he throws them away and buys new ones.) Nor does he have relatives or friends. He seems to live in the perpetual present, his past a mystery revealed in flashes.

We sent writer **Steve Oney,** *who recently profiled former NFL star Herschel Walker for* PLAYBOY, *to New York to visit with Child at his Manhattan home. Oney reports: "My first afternoon in the city I accompanied Child to BookExpo, publishing's annual convention, at the Javits Center. Unlike most book signings, which attract a mere handful of devotees, Child's drew a mob. His publicists had to turn people away. Over the next few days we talked in Child's midtown office and in an apartment higher up in the same building, where, when he's not at his vacation place in Provence or at a new spread in the English countryside, he lives with his wife, Jane. Both the office and the apartment are white and no-nonsense. Child's work space contains little more than two iMacs (one for writing, the other for web browsing); the couple's apartment has a bed, a pair of Knoll chairs and not much else. The lone distraction is a collection of vintage bass guitars, which testify to Child's adolescent ambition to be a rocker. Child is a splendid raconteur, affable and wonderfully opinionated, but he comes across as a solitary soul. Like Reacher, he seems more comfortable by himself than in the company of others."*

PLAYBOY: Paramount cast the diminutive Tom Cruise to play Jack Reacher. You've been quoted as saying you don't object.

"All kinds of people have been interested [in playing Jack Reacher]: Brad Pitt, Hugh Jackman and Vince Vaughn. A black Reacher was mentioned. Would that have produced the same outrage [as casting Tom Cruise]?"

"My father disapproves of practically everything I do. I'm not Calvinist enough. I buy luxury items. If I want to go somewhere and there's an expensive flight I want at 10, then I take that flight. And I'll have a limo waiting."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL SCOTT SLOSAR

"I'm a contemplative person, and weed helps me cut through the membranes of daily cares. It simplifies things. If I'm struggling on a book, I'll light a pipe and the answer will sometimes come to me."

Come on—Reacher's size and ruggedness are an essential part of his appeal. You have to be disappointed.

CHILD: *Disappointed* is the wrong word. When you transfer a book to the screen, something's going to give. It seems to me there are three essential things about Reacher. First, he's smart. Second, he's still and quiet yet menacing. Third, he's huge. It was always likely we were going to lose one of those characteristics. The question was which. For a long time we were fixated on his physique. We had to have a big guy. But we got nowhere. There were no actors big enough who could do even one of the other things. Then it came as an epiphany. Give up the physique and concentrate on Reacher's smartness and quietness.

PLAYBOY: Rabid fans of your novels have started a Facebook page called "Tom Cruise is not Jack Reacher." What do you say to them?

CHILD: Readers feel they have some incredibly intimate possession. Reacher is theirs alone. Now suddenly this will be blown open. They get defensive. They think, I don't want this taken away from me. This is my private thing, and the whole world is going to see it. The nature of the relationship has changed. People feel hostile toward someone else's interpretation of a book. Their default position is opposition. I say to them, "See the movie, and then we'll talk about it." My guess is that out of every 100 book lovers, 75 will say, "That was really good." And 25 will hate it. There's just nothing you can do about that.

PLAYBOY: What other actors were considered for the part?

CHILD: All kinds of people have been interested at one time or another: Brad Pitt, Hugh Jackman and Vince Vaughn. A black Reacher was mentioned: Will Smith or Jamie Foxx. Would that have produced the same outrage? Reacher is not black.

PLAYBOY: Does Cruise pull it off?

CHILD: Cruise is this monster celebrity—global superstar and tabloid fodder. That's all in your face. But you have to look past that. You've got to look underneath at what's there. And what's there with Cruise? This is in no way damning with faint praise, but he shows up and does the work, and he does it properly and on time. And that's a rare thing. He is utterly reliable, and to me there's nothing more important. He will do the job, and he will do it the way it should be done. That's 85 percent of the battle. The next sort of 10 percent is talent, and Cruise has that too. He is a talented professional. Reacher is in good hands.

PLAYBOY: You must see why some readers think you've made a pact with the devil. The movie is based on your novel *One Shot,* but Paramount has retitled it *Jack Reacher.* Does that rile you?

CHILD: Absolutely the reverse. When I heard it, I was like, "Yes!" I pumped my fist. If they'd given me a free hand and asked what I wanted the movie to be called, that's what I would have done.

PLAYBOY: But this is your baby. *One Shot* was your first novel to receive widespread critical acclaim.

CHILD: Hollywood is different from publishing. Everybody wants to make a profit in the book business, but if a book fails, it doesn't sink the ship. One of the most expensive books ever was Bill Clinton's autobiography. He received a big advance, and it was a big book. They probably had $15 million riding on that book. And if it had failed utterly, that would have been a drag, but it wouldn't sink the ship. Paramount has $150 million riding on this. If it fails utterly, it does sink the ship. So they tested it, and they found that for young women who didn't know the book, *One Shot* was too masculine, too "snipery." Young women drive movie attendance. They're the ones who tell their boyfriends which movie they're going to see on Friday. The studio changed the title to *Jack Reacher.* It lets you know the movie is about a man, not a gun.

PLAYBOY: You *are* pleased.

CHILD: It's a gift. From my point of view, we've now got a $150 million advertising campaign for my brand.

One of the things that fascinate people about Reacher is that he has no possessions. The only thing he owns is a folding toothbrush.

PLAYBOY: Starting with the first Reacher novel, *Killing Floor,* in 1997, you've been successful. Yet only over the past few years have your books consistently topped best-seller lists. Is there something in the zeitgeist?

CHILD: One of the things that fascinate people about Reacher is that he has no possessions. Apart from a passport and an ATM card, the only thing he owns is a folding toothbrush, and that has become a legendary talking point among readers. But I think there's more to it. Since the financial crisis hit, people are realizing you don't own things; things own you. You might enjoy the stuff you've accumulated, but you don't enjoy the debt. People are beginning to have an uneasy relationship with possessions. They would like to walk away from the things weighing them down. That is how Reacher lives. The financial crisis hit in 2008, and I don't think it's a coincidence that was the first year of Reacher's megapopularity. For the first time I had four number one best-sellers—both hardcover and paperback—in the U.S. and the U.K.

PLAYBOY: How did you create Jack Reacher?

CHILD: I didn't overthink it. If you give a character an imagined laundry list of virtues, he'll be overdesigned. I relied on instinct. I just wrote an honest version of a character I'd like to be. He does things I'd like to get away with. When you meet Reacher in the first novel, his hygiene is questionable. He cheats. He shoots people in the back. He doesn't do the noble, face-to-face fighting you expect in the genre. He does whatever it takes to win—but he has honesty and integrity on his side. Of course, I'm being slightly disingenuous, for what do I mean when I say I relied on instinct? By the point I came up with Reacher I was 40 years old, so he's an amalgam of everything I'd been exposed to that I liked. Reacher is an archetype, the mysterious stranger who arrives in the nick of time and then rides off into the sunset. It's a specifically defined character present in every culture for more than a thousand years: the knight errant.

PLAYBOY: The quirkiest thing about Reacher may be that he's an ex–military police officer. Why didn't you make him a retired Special Forces officer instead?

CHILD: Partly because that's boring, and partly because it's stupid. Why go head-to-head with what somebody else is doing well? There are hundreds of books with ex-Rangers or ex–Delta Force members. I also felt that military police have familiarity with crimes and investigation, so I thought an MP was the way to go. It also emphasizes Reacher's alienation. He's worked all his life in a branch of the service that is despised. That makes him a little more isolated. By the same token, I made Reacher a West Point graduate who achieved the rank of major. That makes him the equivalent of Sir Lancelot.

PLAYBOY: Reacher has a habit of stumbling across injustices and settling scores. In doing so, he typically racks up massive body counts. How do you justify the violence?

CHILD: *Justify* is a big word, because my novels are not textbooks on how to live. I'm not saying this is what we ought to do. The function of a crime novel is to give us what we don't get in real life. And what we don't get in real life is satisfaction. At the end of a Reacher book, there are summary executions. They bring closure to the story. This isn't recommending that we summarily execute people. It's standing in for legal procedure in a way readers like. When you put a criminal in the legal system, in the opinion of a lot of people he gets too many rights. We understand that in real life we need constraints, but we don't need them in fiction. If Reacher apprehends a proven child molester, he shoots him. Reacher is the alpha male of the genre. He doesn't suffer misgivings. He's a constant force, which I think of as a metaphor for our desire for order and fair play.

PLAYBOY: In several of your novels, Reacher overwhelms enemies with a signature move, the head butt. Is this a skill worth acquiring?

CHILD: A head butt is a wonderful thing because it's unexpected. Nobody expects to be head butted. Way back, I guess deep in our brains from evolution, we learned not to hit things with our heads. It's generally not a good idea. It can be instantaneous and conclusive. It seems unhinged. It *is* unhinged. It raises the ante. People talk about bringing a gun to a knife fight. If you're in a brawl and you use a head butt, it's like bringing a sawed-off shotgun to a knife fight.

PLAYBOY: Is there an art to the head butt?

CHILD: To do it correctly you use the arch of your forehead, which is thick bone. And an arch is an incredibly strong structure. If you head butt a concrete post, you might do yourself damage, but if you head butt another human, you're not going to do yourself any harm. It's best delivered with a downward motion. If you do it in an upward direction you can drive bone fragments into your opponent's brain, which can be lethal. A head butt that arcs downward breaks the nose and cheeks, driving bone fragments toward the jaw. It doesn't go any further than you intended it to, but it can be devastating.

PLAYBOY: For all of Reacher's macho, he's a smart guy, really more brains than brawn.

CHILD: Yes. He would much rather solve a crime by figuring it out than beating it out of somebody. You know the Sherlock Holmes line that when you've eliminated all the possibilities, what remains, however improbable, must be the truth? That's how Reacher operates. In *Killing Floor,* the key clue is the difference between the plural possessive apostrophe and the singular possessive apostrophe. In other words, does the apostrophe go after the *s* or before? The books are cerebral. A recurring line, of course, is "Reacher said nothing." He's thinking. Given that the books emphasize the physical, there's a quietness that is reassuring. It's comforting that this giant is capable of rational thought. He's like a dancing bear.

PLAYBOY: How are you like Reacher?

CHILD: We're both rational. I'm not in any way a spiritual person. If I can't see it and it can't be proved, I don't believe it. We're both observant. I notice a lot of things, and I try to explain them to myself.

PLAYBOY: Do you share Reacher's willingness to insert yourself into dicey situations?

CHILD: I would like to be that person who doesn't walk by. Most of the time I do, but if there's something egregious, I try to help. One night I was walking on Broadway, and a cab had stopped. The driver was a skinny Sikh, and he was trying to eject his passenger, a fleshy, frat-boy type. The driver was worried this kid was drunk and was going to throw up in his cab, so the driver was throwing him out. But the guy wouldn't leave. It was a mismatch, this little driver who's paying $150 a shift to lease a cab and this boorish frat boy threatening to screw up his night. So I crossed the street and helped the driver out, because I think at some point you can't just walk past.

PLAYBOY: Did the frat boy tell you to fuck off?

CHILD: He was aggressive, but he was too drunk to be a threat unless we fell and he rolled on top of me. He sort of stumbled, and I held him up by the collar. He was probably 24 and had a job on Wall Street or something. I mean, these guys are not tough. I was brought up in a different time, in a place where the physical was more serious than it is now.

PLAYBOY: You were raised in Birmingham, in England's Midlands. Was it really that hard-core?

CHILD: Birmingham is the New Jersey of Great Britain. It was a sort of inarticulate society where if you had problems the only recourse was violence.

PLAYBOY: What was your first fight?

CHILD: My elder brother, Richard, was a spindly kid, and I was big for my age. Family legend has it that when I was three and he was six, someone was pulling his ears, and I waded in and fought off this kid. A few years later my parents explicitly said to me, "You have to look after him." We went to Cherry Orchard County Primary School, which was in this blighted industrial landscape and had the stump of a dead cherry tree in one corner. My first duty at recess was to make sure Richard was all right before I could go play with my friends.

PLAYBOY: What made the Birmingham of your youth such a war zone?

CHILD: There was a tremendous tribalism, which supported a bullying culture. If your parents were more aspirational than somebody else's parents, you were marked out. If you were doing well in class, you were marked out. At the age of 10 or 11, when you switched from elementary to high school, if you got into a good school, it grew worse. I got a scholarship to the best high school, King Edward's, founded in 1552. J.R.R. Tolkien went there, as did Kenneth Tynan. The old building is a beautiful Gothic brick structure designed by the guy who designed the houses of Parliament. I had to get in and out of my inner-city neighborhood twice a day. I

wore the school uniform—a blue blazer with a purple and yellow tie—and it was a badge of shame that essentially got me attacked. I had to fight because I was acting above myself.

PLAYBOY: Every week?

CHILD: I would say every day, more or less.

PLAYBOY: A fight in which a punch was thrown?

CHILD: Pretty much, yeah. Every day I got off the bus and walked the last half-mile home, which took me down a border road, in terms of territory. In Birmingham some streets were yours and others were not. There was a definite demarcation. To get home, I walked down this road. There would always be two or three kids there waiting to give me trouble. Routinely, we'd have a fight. I wouldn't wait for them to start anything. I knew why they were there. I walked up and hit them, and they hit back.

PLAYBOY: Is this when you learned how to head butt?

CHILD: I saw somebody do it, and I imitated it. For a while I head butted someone once a week. I also had a knife, and typically you'd have a bicycle chain, which you'd swing or wrap around your fist as a knuckle-duster. Once or twice some kids, including me, got double-edged Gillette razor blades and sewed them under our lapels. If anybody grabbed us, they'd shred their fingers. It was serious shit. I finally got to the point where I didn't want to be hassled anymore. I said, "If you pull a knife on me, I'll break your arm." That happened twice. I turned the guys' wrists inside out, forcing the elbows. This sort of mayhem was expected. No one was arrested. The most the police would do was come by and clip you on the ear.

PLAYBOY: What did your parents say?

CHILD: There was a gigantic gap between us. My father worked for the Inland Revenue, the British equivalent of the IRS. He's a Northern Irish Protestant, hates Catholics and has an imperial stance about the superiority of the white man and the inferiority of colored people. My mother clung to the middle-class dream of seeing me and my three brothers become pillars of some kind. I don't want to disparage them. They were doing their best with no overt malice and certainly no negligence. But it was dour and negative. There was no basis for communication.

PLAYBOY: How long did your head-butting period last?

CHILD: By my late teens most of the aggression was petering out. My teenage years overall were fantastic. It really started happening for me in the spring of 1969, when I lost my virginity at the age of 14 and a half. Somebody's parents were always away, and there'd be a party at that house. The entire purpose was sex—sex, drugs and rock and roll. It was a Friday night. There were a bunch of boys, a bunch of girls. There was snogging. Then it went a little further. Then I went to bed with this blonde 14-year-old. The next thing I knew her 16-year-old sister was in there with me too.

PLAYBOY: That sounds better than brawling.

CHILD: It was. The late 1960s and early 1970s were wonderful. Everybody was in a band. It didn't matter whether you had talent. If you took the entire male population of Britain between the ages of 14 and 20 and divided it by four, that's the number of bands you had. I was in one called Dark Tower. I played guitar, badly. We did covers of Steppenwolf, Cream—derivative, blues-based music. We played Digbeth Civic Hall one New Year's Eve. It was a genuine gig. We got paid.

PLAYBOY: Was there a great music scene in Birmingham?

CHILD: Yes. One time I remember rehearsing, and this well-spoken older boy—he was 19, which when you're 14 seems totally grown-up—came in to check out the facility because his new band was rehearsing the next night. Sure enough, the next night he showed up.

Being an immigrant, I'm intensely patriotic about America. I love the diversity. Americans are much more vital than the inbred, pasty-faced people of Britain.

He helped us shove our equipment off; we helped him shove his on. This well-spoken young man from the area was Robert Plant, and his new band was Led Zeppelin. This was their second rehearsal. We heard them play their first song.

PLAYBOY: How fully did you experience the Age of Aquarius?

CHILD: In 1969 I went to the Isle of Wight Festival; in 1970, the Bath Festival. It was a great era, especially because my parents were so backward looking. They were worried about the kind of dangers you might encounter in the 1950s. The dangers of the 1960s and 1970s were not on their radar. They did not know what drugs were. They were only concerned that I might get drunk. One time my mom found a cube of hash wrapped in silver paper in my pocket and gave it back to me. I think she thought I was saving metal for the war effort, as they did in the 1940s. She had no clue. It was the same as having totally permissive parents. I was uncontrolled and unmolested.

PLAYBOY: Yet all the while you were getting a superb education.

CHILD: It was odd. King Edward's embodied an old-fashioned model that was already going out of date by the time I was there. For a kid like me, British society was structured—the class system. For 100 years, this had been the way out. You went to this school and then to a good university, and you might become a solicitor or a doctor. That was my parents' hope. But the system was dying on its feet. King Edward's was all Latin and Greek. I possessed a pragmatic intelligence rather than an academic one. I didn't struggle intellectually, but I felt parallel to the place. I didn't understand it. What was the point? Give me a problem, and I'll solve it. Give me a task, and I'll do it. Tell me to study Virgil and Homer, and I'm asking why.

PLAYBOY: You might have chafed, but you didn't rebel. You ended up going to law school. Was that to please your parents?

CHILD: It did please my folks, but that was not my reason. It was just that after having been to a school like King Edward's, you were on a track where you had to go to university. In the British system, you do the pinnacle of exams at secondary school. Based on your grades, this says which university you're going to. I did these exams in June, and then I traveled around Europe with friends. I got back, and the exam results were there, and they were decent. But I'd basically forgotten I'd taken them, and school was about to start. So I went to the library in Birmingham. In the reference section there were university prospectuses. I found one that, by the pictures, looked good: the University of Sheffield in Yorkshire. It had a vacancy in law, which in Britain is an undergraduate degree. I thought about it a minute and decided, Great. I didn't want to be a lawyer, so there would be no professional imperative—I would not have to graduate at the top of my class. But law was an amalgam of things I was interested in: history, language, economics and politics. If you don't want to be a lawyer, it's a fabulous degree.

PLAYBOY: What did you want to do?

CHILD: I wanted to be in theater. It dated back to elementary school. The principal was a woman obsessed with American musicals. Twice a year she put on shows, and I loved them. I went out for one, and it was one of those awful moments when you learn something important about yourself. They said, "Okay, sing this." I started, never having been told that I can't sing. I didn't understand why everybody was looking away. Finally, I realized. I became a spear carrier, then migrated backstage and stayed there during high school. When I got to university, I worked in the student theater to the point I neglected everything else. I should have graduated in 1976, but I spent all my time on productions and was held back.

PLAYBOY: It's 1977. You're a young lawyer with theatrical *(continued on page 133)*

What Stauer Clients Are Saying About Our Hybrid Watches

★★★★★

"Great watch... an impressive piece straight out of the box."
— *C. from Colorado*

Suggested Retail $395... NOW, on your wrist for $49 For a limited Time Only

No More Mr. Nice Watch

*Forget sleek and subtle, the Stauer Colossus Hybrid is one tough timepiece…**now for less than $50!***

Never underestimate your competition. Just ask Demetrius, the unfortunate Greek general who set out to conquer Rhodes in 305 BC. He assumed that a massive force of 40,000 men, a fleet of Aegean pirates and an arsenal of wall-smashing war machines would be enough to crush the tiny Greek island. He was wrong. The Rhodians were tougher than he thought. And so is this watch. If you've always believed that the biggest, baddest watches had to cost big, bad money, the $49 Stauer ***Colossus Hybrid Chronograph*** is here to change your mind.

A monument to toughness. The people of Rhodes were ready for Demetrius and repelled his attack. To celebrate, they built the Colossus of Rhodes, a 107-foot bronze and iron giant that towered over the harbor like a ten-story trophy. It warned future invaders that "Rhodes is tougher than you think." You give the same message when you wear the Stauer ***Colossus***.

The timepiece that works twice as hard. In designing the ***Colossus Hybrid Chronograph***, our instructions to the watchmaker were clear: build it as tough as a battleship and fill it full of surprises. Make it a hybrid, because it should work twice as hard as a regular watch. And make it look like a million bucks, because when you put it on, you should get excited about rolling up your sleeves. Mission accomplished.

A toolbox on your wrist. It will keep you on schedule, but the ***Colossus Hybrid*** is about much more than time. The imposing case features a rotating gunmetal bezel that frames the silver, black and yellow face. You'll find a battalion of digital displays on the dial arranged behind a pair of luminescent hands and a bold yellow second hand. Powered by a precise quartz movement, the watch is doubly accurate in analog and digital mode. And it's packed with plenty of handy extras including a bright green EL back-light for enhanced nighttime visibility, a tachymeter along the outer dial and a full complement of alarms and split-second countdown timers. The ***Colossus Hybrid*** secures with a folded steel bracelet that highlights a row of striking dark center links. It's a rugged watch that's more than ready for your daily grind.

Your Satisfaction is Guaranteed. Wear the Stauer ***Colossus Hybrid*** for 30 days and if you are not 100% thrilled with your purchase, return it for a full refund of your purchase price. But once you get a taste of more watch for less money, it's likely you'll be back for more... and we'll be waiting.

WATCH SPECS: -Easy-to-read analog/digital modes -Back-lighting and luminescent hands - Tachymeter, countdown timers and alarms -Folded stainless steel bracelet fits a 6 3/4"–9" wrist

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Smart Luxuries—Surprising Prices

the REDEMPTION of a SNEAKER PIMP

Did Sonny Vaccaro ruin college sports? Is he really the right guy to save them?

BY NEAL GABLER

So there he was in the late 1970s, tooling around the country in a rented red or black Thunderbird, zipping from college campus to college campus, sitting down with the basketball coaches, most of whom he knew and knew well, telling them he was going to give them shoes for their team, gratis, at schools where the players had often been wearing secondhand sneakers. He would throw in a little gravy for the coach—$5,000 or $10,000—which he paid with checks from his personal account because the company for which he worked, a little $25-million-a-year outfit named Nike, headquartered in the Oregon boondocks, hadn't given him any instructions or a budget. And now here he is at the age of 73, still zipping from campus to campus, but on a different sort of mission. "I started it off," Sonny Vaccaro acknowledges loudly, standing behind a blond wood table and facing a classroom of students at the University of California at Berkeley. "Nothing was ever done clandestine." He tells them of his early Nike days when

ILLUSTRATION BY JUSTIN PAGE

Sonny knows how to pick them: (from left) Vaccaro with Eastern Michigan University basketball prodigy turned San Antonio Spur George Gervin; with Michael Jordan, the legend behind Nike's phenomenally successful Air Jordans; with Tracy McGrady, who went straight from high school to the Toronto Raptors; and with LeBron James, who bypassed college to join his hometown Cleveland Cavaliers and who just won his first NBA championship, with the Miami Heat, this year.

he began the commercialization of college athletics and earned the enduring enmity of many collegiate purists. "I've been called every name in the book," he says. And he has, among them "the last don," "bagman" and "sneaker pimp."

But Vaccaro's new mission is not to denigrate himself. His mission is to destroy the National Collegiate Athletic Association—the organization that governs college sports and has denied its athletes any share of the money they bring in to their universities while the NCAA itself takes a sizable cut. "The student athlete is a fiction," Vaccaro told the class, flitting from one indictment to another. "The majority of the athletes do not get their degrees. Amateurism is not a word; it's a trick." And of the NCAA: "What do they do? They actually do nothing."

After 30 years working successively at Nike, Adidas and Reebok, Vaccaro no longer peddles sneakers. In fact, he hasn't earned a paycheck in five years, and when he lectures he pays his own travel expenses. He has given more than $4 million to various charities through his nonprofit foundation. Now when he goes from campus to campus, he is selling his cause, trying to get students to think about the abuses of college sports. The NCAA accuses Vaccaro of "overwhelming cynicism" for questioning the organization's commitment to amateurism and vehemently insists it will never pay athletes. Vaccaro has facilitated a lawsuit against the NCAA that, if successful, may wind up changing the face of college sports. He calls it a revolution, and he may be right.

Vaccaro's suit springs from the way college athletes are treated, especially by the NCAA, a consortium of colleges and universities that was formed early in the 20th century with the original purpose of providing safety regulations. At the center of the dispute is a form that every college athlete is compelled to sign in order to receive a scholarship. According to Jon King, one of the head attorneys in Vaccaro's case, no university has ever advised an athlete to seek legal counsel before signing the form, and no athlete has ever done so. Athletes just sign. But there is a hitch. Although the scholarship is guaranteed for only a year, by signing the form, athletes also sign away in perpetuity the rights to their likenesses as college athletes. The NCAA claims that athletes retain the rights to their names and images as long as they are not identified with their college teams, but since names and likenesses have little value when stripped of their athletic associations, these rights are basically worthless. Meanwhile, the NCAA sells the images and names attached to the teams—to ESPN in classic game tapes, in DVDs, on vintage jerseys, in game photos and to the video game manufacturer Electronic Arts. The NCAA makes millions. The athletes make nothing.

"The student athlete is a fiction. Amateurism is not a word; it's a trick."

—Sonny Vaccaro

What is galling is that when it comes to college athletics, we are talking not just about millions of dollars in rights to former players but ultimately billions of dollars in rights to current ones. According to the Knight Commission, an independent agency that monitors college sports, the 10 public universities with the highest sports budgets spent a median of $98 million in 2009, a number the organization estimates will rise to $250 million by 2020. Duke economist Charles Clotfelter says the average salary for head football coaches at major universities soared from $377,000 in 1981 to $2.4 million in 2009, both expressed in 2009 dollars. And the NCAA gets its share of the largesse. In April 2010 it signed a $10.8 billion contract with CBS and Turner Sports for the right to televise the next 14 years of its March Madness basketball tournament. As author Michael Lewis put it in a *New York Times* op-ed about college sports, "Everyone associated with it is getting rich except the people whose labor creates the value."

How much is a college athlete worth to a school? A 2006 study by Robert Brown, a professor at Cal State–San Marcos, determined that a college basketball player who was an NBA prospect was worth between $900,000 and $1.2 million a year in terms of the revenue he brought to his team. But Brown also found that despite this value, the University of North Carolina, to cite one example, awarded a total of $318,097 in scholarships that year to its entire basketball team. A more recent study, by the National College Players Association, an advocacy group for college athletes, determined that the average Football Bowl Subdivision player was worth $121,048 per season and the average Division I basketball player $265,027. But remember, that's the average over *all* the FBS and Division I teams. The numbers are much higher at the highest-revenue-producing schools. According to the NCPA, the average football player at the University of Texas is worth $513,922 per season, and the average Duke basketball player $1,025,656. And yet the NCPA estimates that 85 percent of big-time college athletes live below the poverty level, with an average shortfall of $3,222 between what they get in scholarship money and what it costs to meet their living expenses.

This is what Vaccaro says riles him. He willingly admits he helped create what he calls a "cesspool" of money that leads to *(continued on page 136)*

"Well, if you'd told me a little sooner that you wanted me to go as Lady Godiva, I wouldn't have cut my hair!"

CZECH MATE

A ROLL IN THE GRASS WITH COMELY MODEL

KAMILA HERMANOVÁ

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAN TŮMA

Flowers and a candlelit dinner won't do it for Kamila Hermanová. She wants action. If you want to seduce this searingly hot Prague model, throw her on the back of a Harley-Davidson Night Rod. Road-trip to somewhere wild—Siberia, perhaps, or Alaska—and check in to a cool hotel. Blast some music. "L.A. Woman" will do the job. She's a huge Jim Morrison fan. Buy her an awesome dinner. No ice cream or chocolate for this vixen; she'll skip dessert, thank you. That's how you get Kamila excited. She may look innocent, but trust us, she's a rock-and-roller, and she can raise hell with the best of them. When it comes to the opposite sex, she knows what she wants—or more to the point, what she doesn't. "They must not be selfish and self-centered," she says. "Then they are not real men." Whatever you do, don't piss off Kamila. She is an experienced martial artist. Think you have what it takes? Congratulations: You've just met your ultimate Czech mate.

Gilding the Gridiron

the PLAYBOY GUIDE TO TAILGATING

LIKE A GENTLEMAN

1

2

With your college years behind you—and college football season upon us—it's high time your tailgating party graduated from supermarket hot dogs and plastic cups of beer. Our upscale upgrade features a surf-and-turf grilling menu worthy of an Iron Chef (Wolfgang Puck, to be exact), top-shelf champagne cocktails (from the world's greatest bar, no less) and the coolest vintage-inspired fashion and gear. Take a cue from the following pages and you may need to put up a velvet rope.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONY KELLY / FASHION BY JENNIFER RYAN JONES

3

4

GEAR UP

License to Grill

FOUR WAYS TO UPGRADE YOUR GRILLING GAME

Get Wood

Pit masters will tell you the best way to grill is over real hardwood coals. B&B oak lump charcoal burns hot and clean and adds the fragrance of real wood smoke to your party. Be sure to bring along a charcoal chimney starter to fire it up. ($23 for 20 pounds, bbcharcoal.com)

Use Real Tongs

Another vital pit-master tip: Don't buy a "BBQ set" with clumsy tongs and an oversize, serrated-edge spatula. A set of long-handled, restaurant-style tongs will work better, and you can use them in your kitchen the rest of the year. (Edlund 16-inch tongs with lock, $16, edlundco.com)

Cook Like an Iron Chef

Football season comes but once a year, so cook something to stand out from the burgers-and-brats crowd. We enlisted Wolfgang Puck—yes, the godfather of all that is luxurious and delicious in food—to give us a recipe for grilled lobster with spicy herbed butter and tips on how to grill the perfect steak. (See page 82.)

Prep School

Split those lobsters and slice those succulent steaks on a burly hardwood cutting board. ($90, jkadams.com)

1. RAISE THE BAR CART

Leave the keg stands to the kids. A well-appointed mobile bar should have all the comforts of the latest nouveau speakeasy: gleaming barware, top-shelf liquor and an ice bucket—no stooping into the cooler required. (Mayfair ice bucket, $99, williamssonoma.com)

2. CARRY A MANLY BAG

The Filson rugged twill utility bag is what all toolboxes aspire to be. It can carry booze, food and anything else you need to lug to the game. ($245, filson.com)

3. SIT RIGHT

This guy isn't sitting on some nylon folding chair like he's camped out waiting for the latest iPhone release; he's looking smooth on an American-made wood-and-canvas director's chair from Telescope, the preferred on-set seat of Hollywood A-listers. ($110, filmtools.com)

FASHION (*preceding pages*)

Men's fashion, from far left: 1. Coat by J. Crew, shirt from Gant by Michael Bastian, pants by Vineyard Vines, belt by Nautica, shoes by Billy Reid. 2. Blazer by Tommy Hilfiger, shirt by Nautica, pants from Gant by Michael Bastian, bow tie by Brooks Brothers, shoes by Cole Haan. 3. Sweater by Club Monaco, Ludlow shirt by J. Crew, pants from Gant by Michael Bastian, repp tie and watch by Nautica, socks by Ralph Lauren, shoes by Cole Haan. 4. Vintage-style Wisconsin varsity sweater by Etiquette Vintage Design, shirt and khakis by Tommy Hilfiger, tie from Gant by Michael Bastian, penny loafers by G.H. Bass & Co. Women's fashion courtesy of revivalboutique.com and Cole Haan. Cars courtesy of Rodworks Inc., Los Angeles, California, rodworksinc.com; Windsor picnic basket, picnictime.com; Charleston high-back beach chair, lawnchairusa.com.

PROMOTION

Crown Royal

{ TAILGATE COCKTAIL GUIDE }

Perfect pairings for a gentleman's tailgate

{ THE CROWNED CHAMPION }

1 ounce Crown Royal Black
.5 oz triple sec
1 splash of grenadine
3 ounces of club soda

Combine the first three ingredients in a high ball glass with ice, top with Club soda. Garnish with a lime and serve.

{ CROWN ROYAL NEW FASHIONED }

1 oz. Crown Royal DeLuxe Blended Whisky
0.5 oz. amaretto liqueur
0.25 oz. simple syrup
3 dashes bitters
1 orange peel

Stir ingredients in a shaker with ice. Strain into rocks glass. Serve chilled neat and garnish with an orange peel.

{ CROWN ROYAL PRESS }

1.5 oz. Crown Royal DeLuxe Blended Whisky
3 dashes bitters
2 squeezed lemon wedges
1 splash lemon-lime soda
1 lemon wedge

Serve on the rocks and top with lemon-lime soda. Garnish with a lemon and serve.

THE CALL COULD GO EITHER WAY

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

CROWN ROYAL and CROWN ROYAL BLACK Blended Canadian Whisky, 40 & 45% Alc./Vol. ©2012 The Crown Royal Company, Norwalk, CT.

DRINK UP

Respect the Cocktail

SERVE A DRINK THAT'S SOPHISTICATED, SPARKLING AND STRONG—LIKE YOU

Earlier this year, the Varnish, a mixologically inclined speakeasy in downtown Los Angeles, was voted best bar in the country at Tales of the Cocktail, the Oscars of the bartending world. We enlisted their talented barmen to create a high-octane twist on the champagne cocktail.

Nightingale Cocktail

INGREDIENTS

1 oz. Bulleit rye

½ oz. St. Germain elderflower liqueur

2 dashes Regans' orange bitters

Prosecco, chilled

Orange peel

INSTRUCTIONS

Shake first three ingredients with ice and strain into a champagne flute. Top with prosecco. Squeeze orange peel, skin side down, into drink to release aromatic oils. Garnish with peel.

1. GO VINTAGE

The stadium parking lot will be awash in oversize jerseys, hoodies and other school colors. That said, a vintage-style letterman sweater from the good people at Etiquette Vintage Design in Austin will have you showing both your school spirit and your exquisite sense of style. They can custom tailor sharp-looking sweaters and blazers with your school's logo. (evintaged.com)

2. BLANKET STATEMENT

Pack a wool blanket. It can double as a picnic blanket or a wrap for the ladies. (Civil War artillery blanket, $109, woolrich.com)

3. GLASS ACT

Polycarbonate champagne flutes look like glass but won't break when things get too boisterous. (Connoisseur champagne flutes, $42 for six, nauticalluxuries.com)

4. TRAY CHIC

Presentation counts. You've gone to the trouble of making a restaurant-worthy lobster surf and turf, so don't ruin it by serving on paper plates. (Chancellor rectangular tray, $49, potterybarn.com)

5. GET A COOLER COOLER

You'll need ice. A lot of ice. Coleman's reissues of its classic steel-belted 54-quart coolers do the job and look, well, cool. They can also double as seating or a prep surface for your grill mastery. ($150, coleman.com)

EAT UP

Surf and Astroturf

WOLFGANG PUCK'S DREAM GRILL

As if two incredibly masculine proteins weren't enough, you'll be grilling them over hardwood. As if that weren't enough, you'll be doing it the way Wolfgang Puck does. And when Puck says, "Grill this," you're advised to listen. Here's how he grills his lobster. As for steak, cook well-salted one-and-a-half-inch-thick New York strips to a juicy medium rare.

THE MAINE EVENT

Restaurants don't want you to know it, but there's a lobster glut this year and prices have dropped. You have no excuse not to splurge.

Grilled Lobster With Spicy Herbed Butter

Serves four.

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. unsalted butter, softened

3 cloves garlic, chopped

1 red jalapeño, seeds and white membranes removed, chopped

¼ cup chopped Italian parsley

Juice of 1 lemon

3 tbsp. chopped chives

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

2 lobsters, about 1¼ lbs. each

6 lemon wedges

Extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling

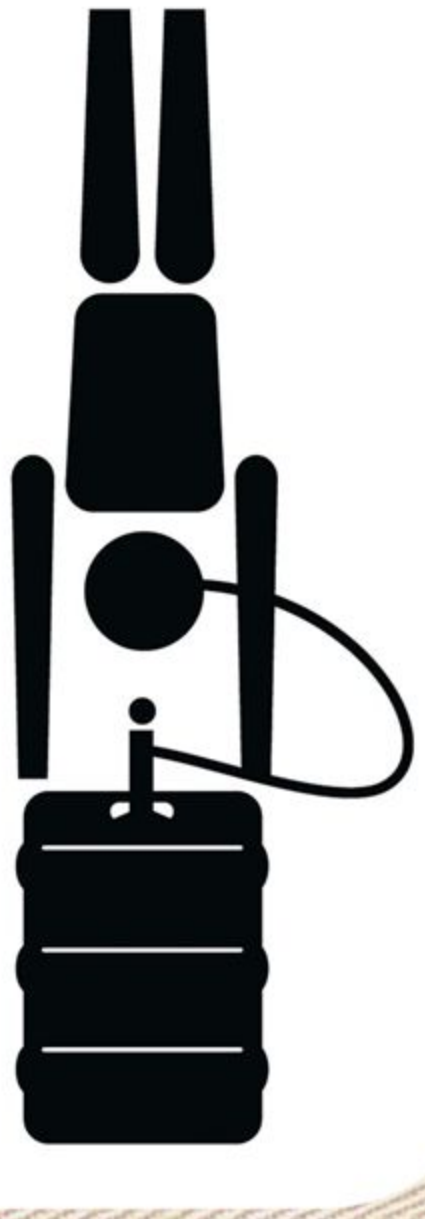
INSTRUCTIONS

The day before: In food processor, combine butter, garlic, jalapeño, parsley, lemon juice and chives. Season with salt and pepper and process until well combined. Refrigerate.

Game day: Preheat grill to high. To kill each lobster instantly, place tip of large chef's knife one inch behind the eyes, then slice blade downward between the eyes in one swift motion. Split lobsters in half lengthwise. Brush meat of lobsters with melted herbed butter, about one tablespoon per lobster half. Place lobsters on grill, flesh side down, and cook until meat has grill marks and starts to turn opaque and firm up, about five minutes.

Turn lobsters over and grill an additional five to six minutes, brushing with more butter, if desired. Remove lobsters and place on a large platter. Squeeze lemon wedges over tail meat, drizzle with olive oil and serve.

"Come on, sweetie—it's Halloween!"



TOP 10 PARTY SCHOOLS ;)

THE NUMBERS HAVE BEEN CRUNCHED AND THE DRINKING STORIES TALLIED. WE NOW PRESENT TO YOU THE BEST UNIVERSITIES IN THE COUNTRY FOR LETTING LOOSE. OUR METHODOLOGY? WE TOOK AMERICA'S TOP 100 COLLEGES AND RANKED THEM ACROSS 900 DATA POINTS IN THREE CATEGORIES: SEX, SPORTS AND NIGHTLIFE. THE HANGOVER JUST WENT AWAY.

1 University of Virginia

Raise a glass to UVA, whose students know a thing or two about raising glasses—and everything else important to this list. The Cavaliers placed an uninspiring 16th in sports but more than made up for it in nightlife and sex, finishing number three and number two, respectively. According to our math, two plus three equals one. Party on!

"UVA is a work hard, play hard kind of environment. You can hang out at the Corner, you can go to a house party for beer Olympics or you can see a huge band play at the basketball arena."

KAZ KOMOLAFE, Politics, Class of 2014

2 University of Southern California

Like SMU (see right), USC offers the best of both worlds. College life is augmented by a thriving Greek system, a national championship–caliber football team and countless southern California coeds. Meanwhile, big-city life in Los Angeles includes the Sunset Strip, Venice Beach and budding starlets.

3 University of Florida

The college edition of Tebow mania is over, but Gainesville remains the SEC's fun-and-sun capital.

4 University of Texas

5 University of Wisconsin

6 University of Georgia

7 Vanderbilt University

8 Tulane University

9 Texas Christian University

10 Ohio State University

#1 SEX LIFE

University of North Carolina

Tar Heel women possess a trio of virtues: They're plentiful (outnumbering male students 10 to seven), they're beautiful (ranking among the best looking, according to student-generated website College Prowler), and they're progressive (see below).

"Ninety percent of my friends view sex as an enjoyable experience that both men and women are capable of initiating and desiring."

RACHEL BEST, English, Class of 2013

BEST OF THE REST

New York University
Georgetown University
UCLA
Yale University
Syracuse University

WORST OF THE REST

Colorado School of Mines

#1 SPORTING LIFE

Ohio State University

In Columbus, top-notch tailgating is rivaled only by the games themselves. Whether it's basketball, football or fencing, Buckeye athletes typically dominate the competition—as does the rabid Buckeye fan base.

"During really big games, people never sit. They're on their feet from start to finish. The energy pulses throughout the stadium. It's very exciting."

JIM LODICO, OSU graduate and sports blogger at thebuckeyeblog.com

BEST OF THE REST

University of Michigan
Texas A&M University
Stanford University
Auburn University
University of Notre Dame

WORST OF THE REST

Yeshiva University

#1 NIGHTLIFE

Southern Methodist University

Tired of Solo cups of warm beer? At SMU, Dallas is your never-ending house party. The number of bars within Dallas County: around 2,000, including Idle Rich Pub, the campus hot spot that best describes the student body.

"The bar scene at SMU definitely dominates—everyone is all about going to the bar and balling out."

COLTON MOYER, International Studies, Class of 2013

BEST OF THE REST

University of Pennsylvania
Stevens Institute of Technology
Northwestern University
Lehigh University
University of Denver

WORST OF THE REST

Brigham Young University

WORST OVERALL PARTY SCHOOL

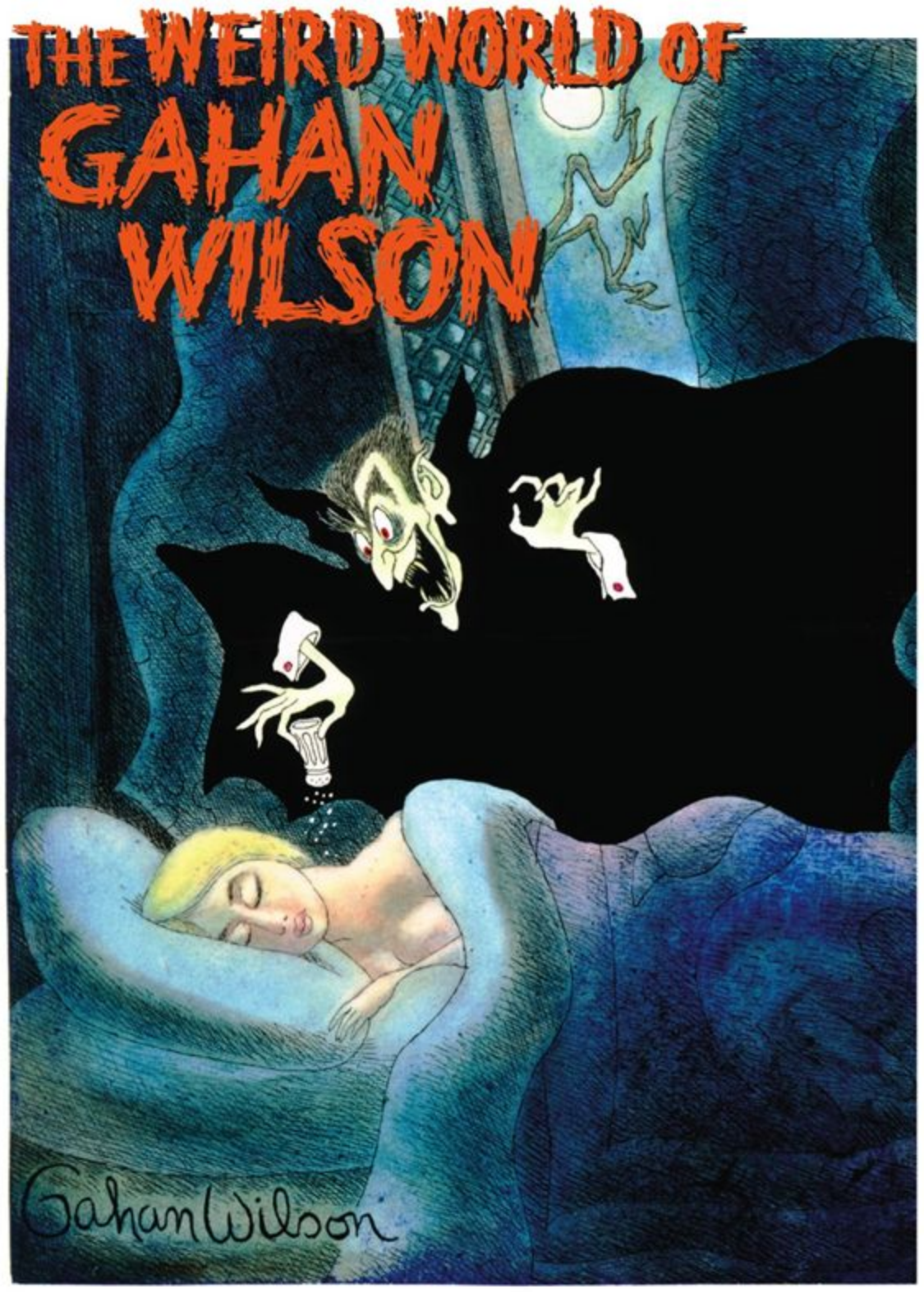
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry

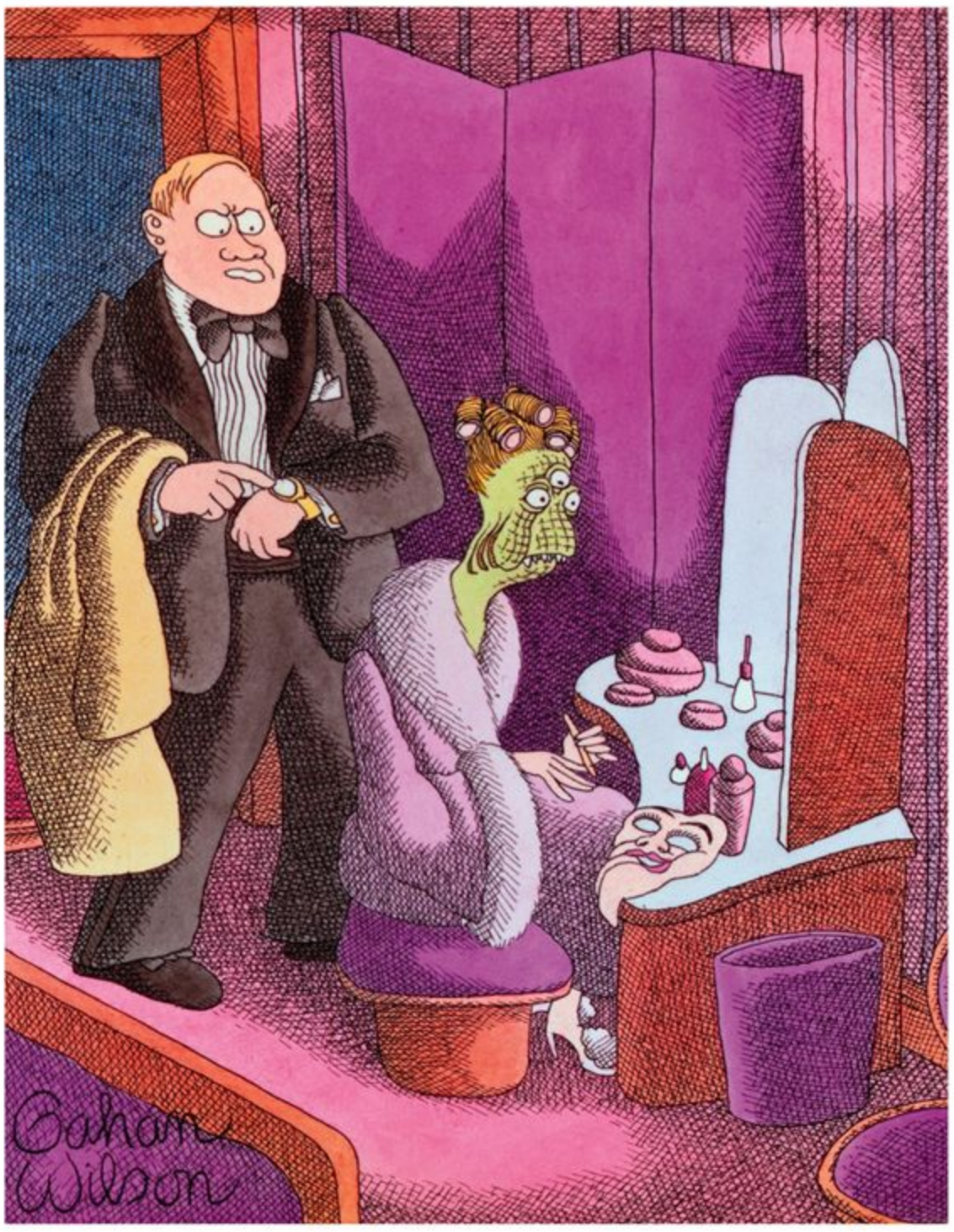
Excellent science program? Of course. Anything else? Not really. Life is so rough at ESF, which sits on the Syracuse campus, that no one from Syracuse knows it exists. But with all that time its students have to study, in 10 years you'll likely be calling an ESF grad "sir."

"Gorgeous girls are scarce, but ESF is perfect if you want to be around people who have the same type of focus."

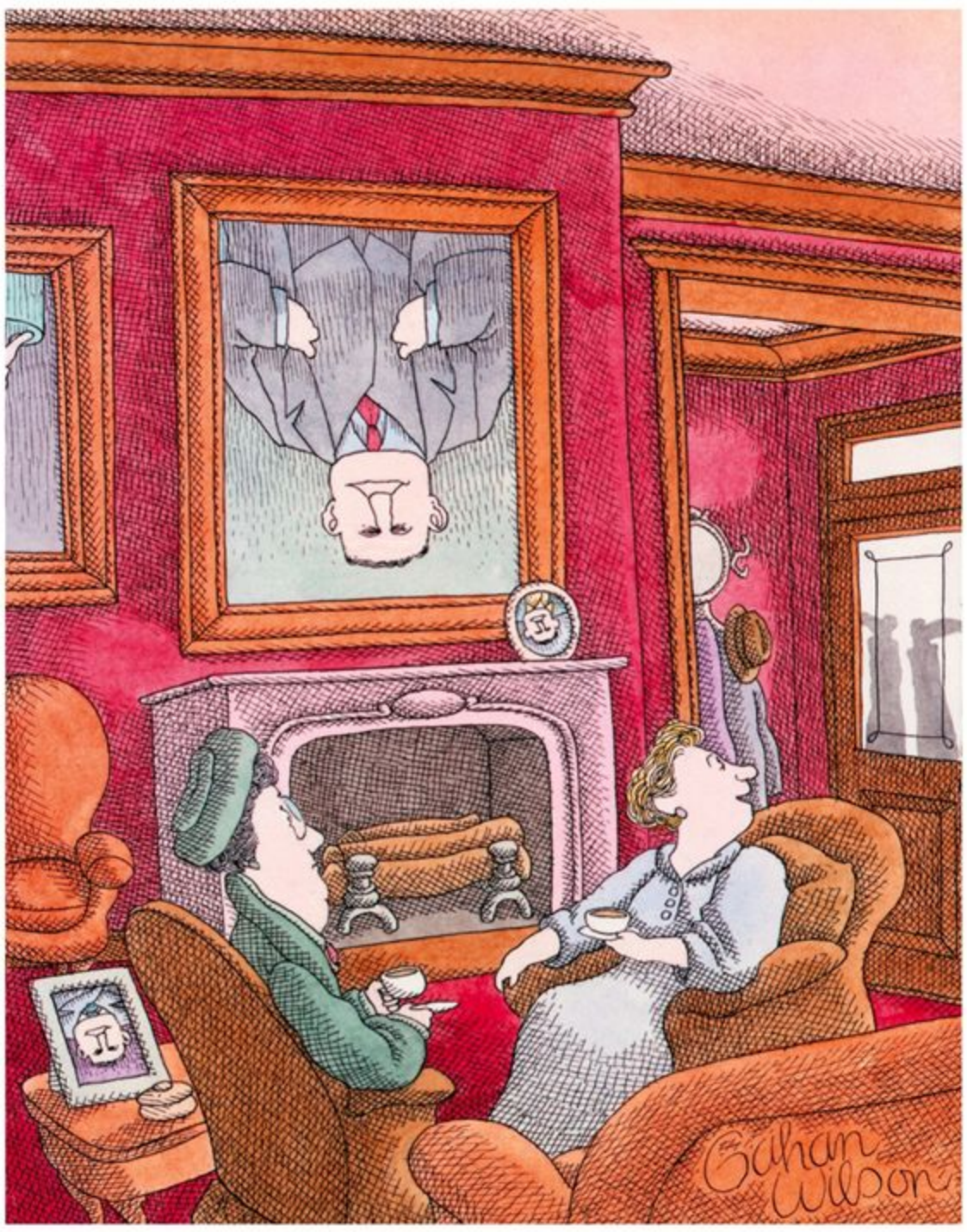
IAN MACKS, Biotechnology, Class of 2015

WORST OF THE REST Worcester Polytechnic Institute University of California, Riverside Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute California Institute of Technology Tufts University

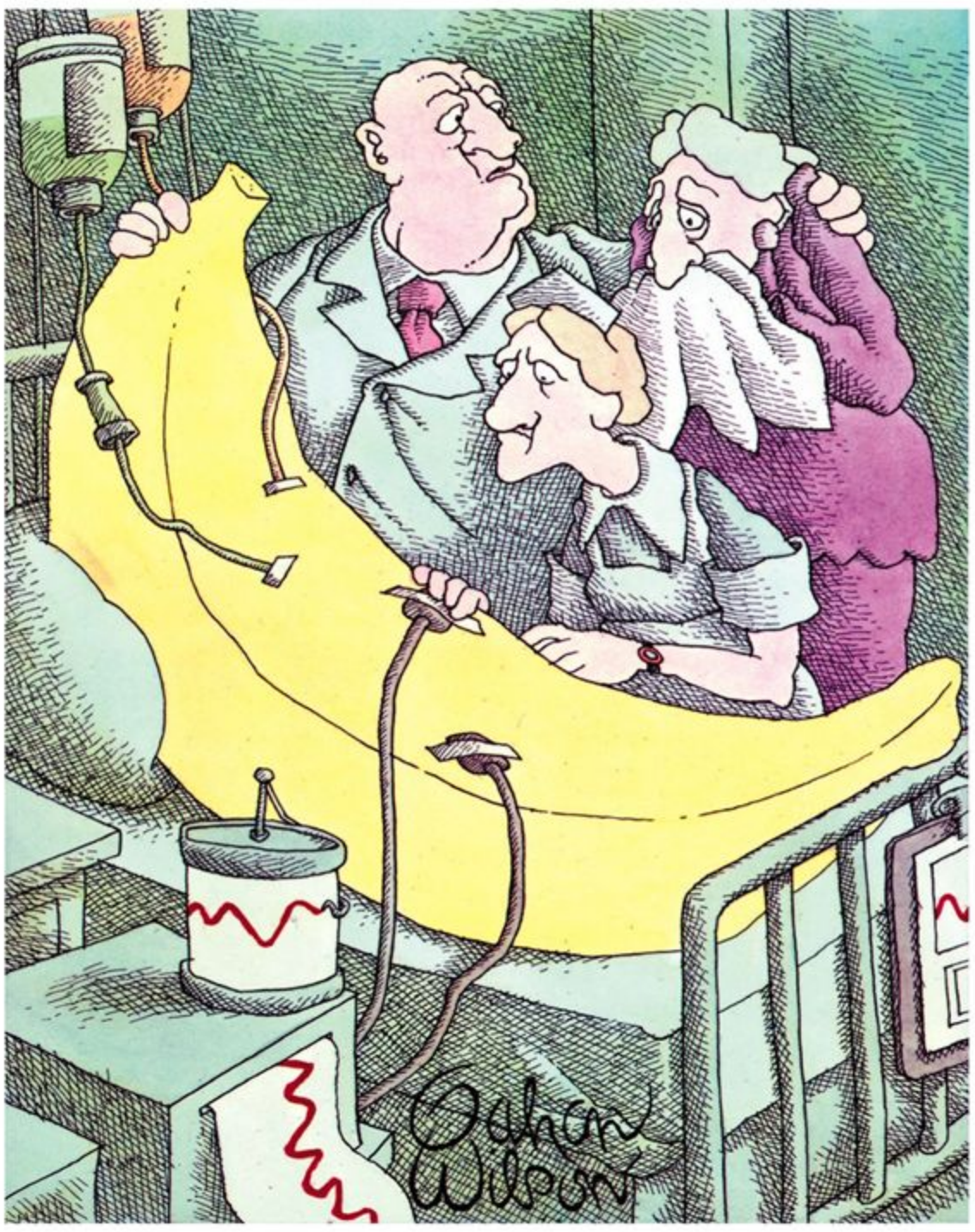




"You mean to say you haven't even put your face on yet?"



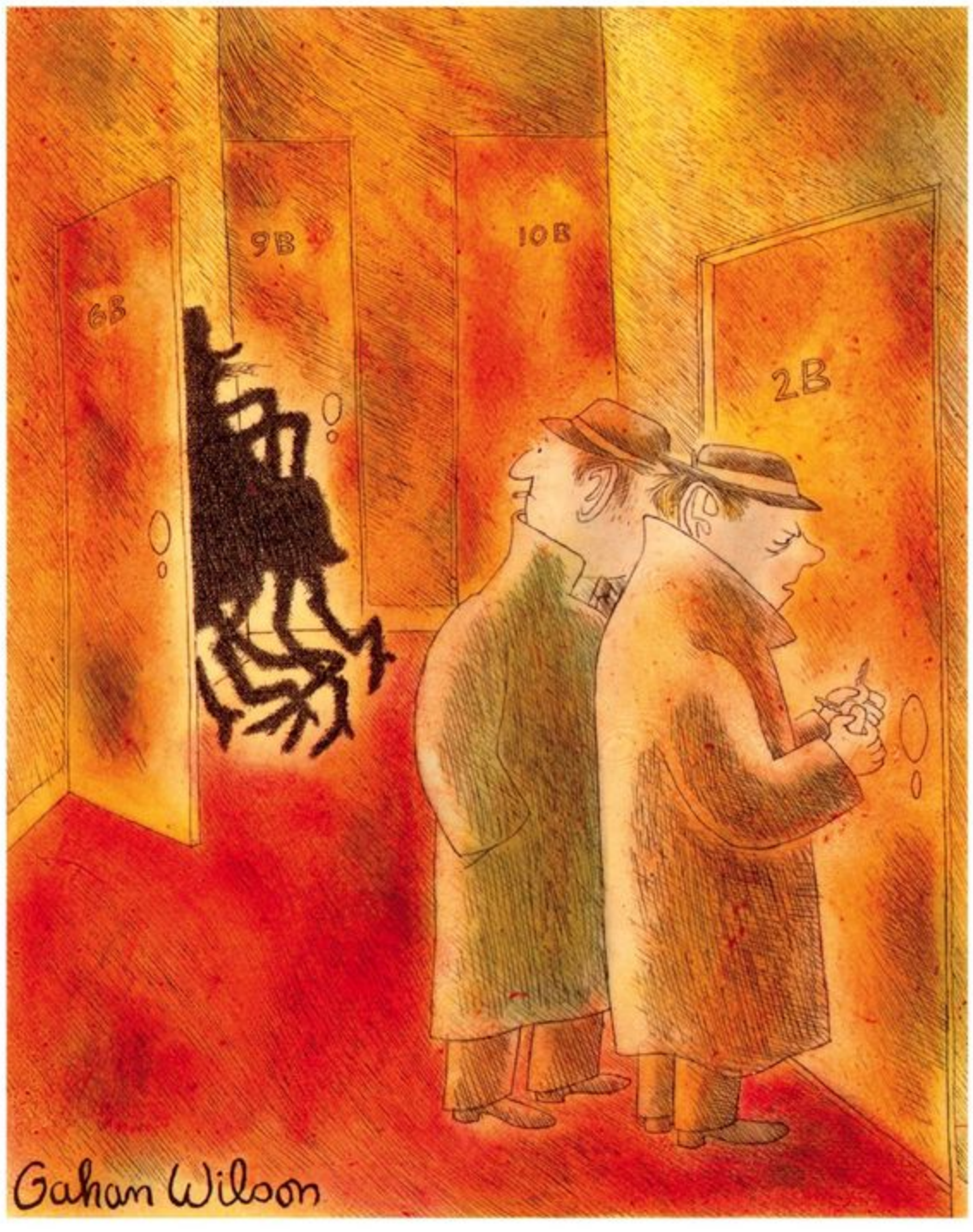
"Here comes Howard now!"



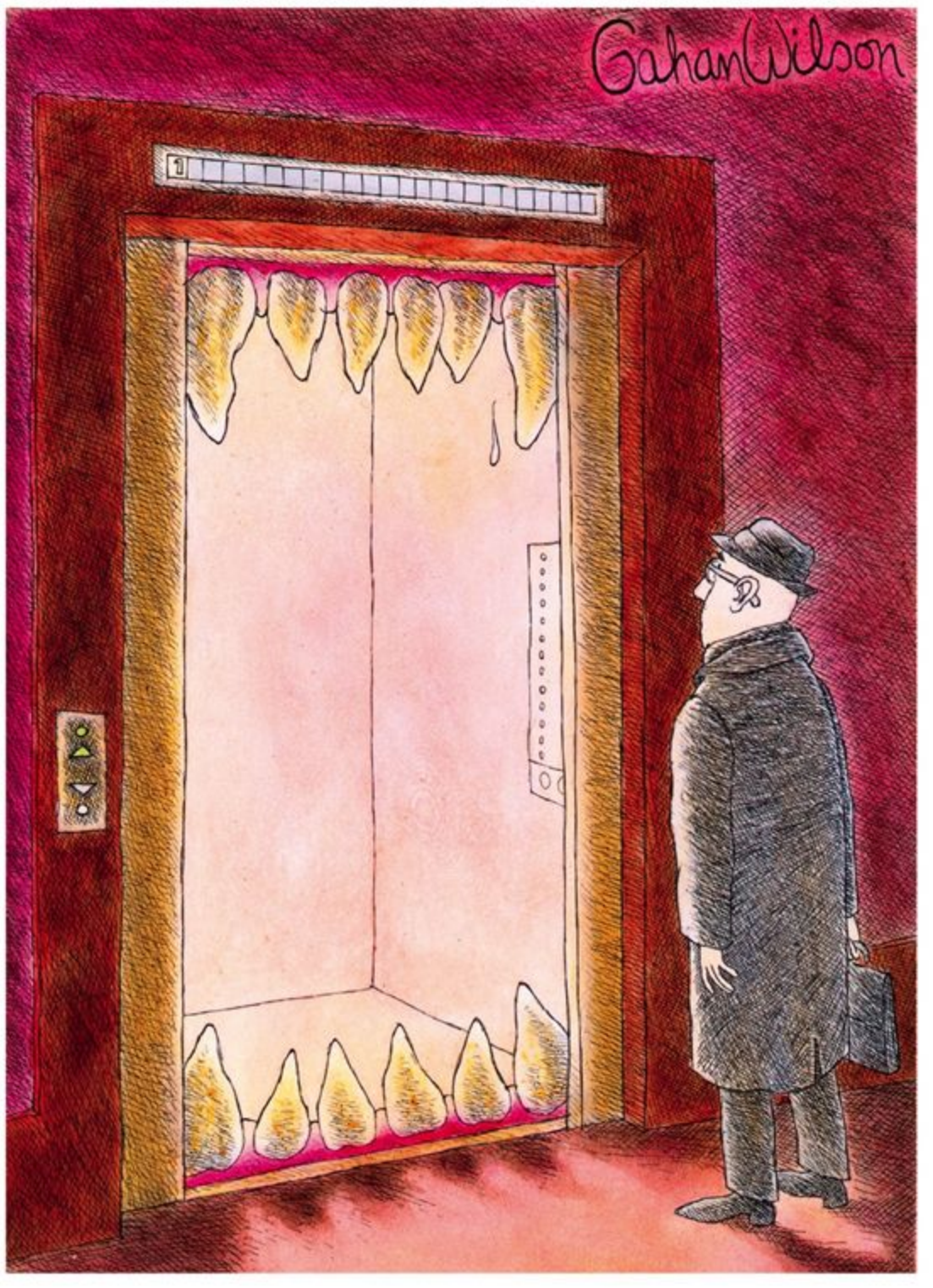
"I'm afraid we'll have no chance of curing your husband until we find out why he changed into a banana."

"Gee, Amelia, I'm really very sorry you won't be able to make it here tonight."

"Well, I guess that's the last time the Cullings ever invite us over!"



"That's the city for you—you live next to someone for years and never even catch a glimpse of them."



50 YEARS
of the
PLAYBOY
INTERVIEW

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: STEPHEN HAWKING

Looking back at our conversation with the intellectual successor to Albert Einstein about how our universe really began

Stephen Hawking

How did all this—we, this Earth, this universe—happen?

That's not an easy question, but it's the one Stephen Hawking has dedicated his life to answering. The theoretical physicist, who is perhaps the world's most influential living scientist, has received almost every major science prize, and in 2009 President Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Many call him the intellectual successor to Albert Einstein, and he was the subject of our April 1990 *Playboy Interview.*

Currently director of research at the Center for Theoretical Cosmology at the University of Cambridge, Hawking broke ground with his theories about the basic laws that explain the cosmos. Some of his most important theorems picked up where Einstein's left off. He is responsible for much of what's known about black holes and the birth of our universe.

Hawking isn't known only for his ivory-tower research but also for books he authored that explain physics to nonscientists. They're some of the biggest-selling science books in history; his seminal *A Brief History of Time* sold more than 10 million copies. *The New Yorker* called it a book of "sunny brilliance." It was followed by *The Universe in a Nutshell, A Briefer History of Time* and his latest number one best-seller, *The Grand Design,* in which Hawking describes the nature of reality and what has been called "the theory of everything."

Hawking's accomplishments would be remarkable under any circumstances, but they're even more extraordinary because, nearly 50 years ago, he was diagnosed with ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, a devastating and often fatal illness. As the disease progressed, Hawking's physical abilities diminished. First he couldn't walk. Soon he couldn't speak. In spite of this, he continued his research and writing—and he was able to grant interviews like this one, "speaking" by way of a computer he controlled with the few fingers he was capable of moving. His synthesized voice has become famous. Hawking has "spoken" on a Pink Floyd song and on episodes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *The Simpsons.*

Hawking, who is now 70, has been married twice and has three children; he still lives in Oxford, which is where, 22 years ago, our interviewer, **Morgan Strong,** met him. At the time, Strong wrote that the scientist "looked terribly frail and small: He could not have weighed more than 100 pounds." Nonetheless, over several days, for several hours a day, working in his home, office and a faculty dining room at Oxford, Hawking patiently answered Strong's questions.

Excerpted from the April 1990 issue

PLAYBOY: Can you tell us a little about your early life, before the secrets of the universe caught your interest?

HAWKING: I was born on January 8, 1942—300 years to the day after the death of Galileo. *(continued on page 145)*

20Q

BY DAVID HOCHMAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHIAS CLAMER

Dax Shepard

THE COMIC TURNED ACTOR (AND DRUGGED-OUT BAD BOY TURNED VEGAN GENTLEMAN) TALKS ABOUT HIS NEWFOUND MONOGAMY WITH KRISTEN BELL, HIS LIFE WITHOUT COCAINE AND BOOZE AND HIS NOT-SO-SECRET MAN CRUSH ON BURT REYNOLDS

Q1

PLAYBOY: Is success what you thought it would be?

SHEPARD: Oh God no, but it's impossible to know until you've had success that it doesn't alter your daily struggles. When I was a struggling Groundling, I thought if I had the life I have now I wouldn't have to brush my teeth anymore and could eat cupcakes all day. In fact, I have to do the same shit I've always had to do to not feel miserable, which is work out, journal, eat well, do something for somebody other than myself at some point every day—even if it's just the dogs, those little fuckers.

Q2

PLAYBOY: So was that really you driving like an outlaw in *Hit & Run*?

SHEPARD: One hundred percent. I'm from Detroit, and my life has been driving cars. In high school it was drag racing. Then I worked for GM because my mother had a company that put on big car shows for journalists. We'd rent out Michigan International Speedway, and I got tons and tons of seat time in these crazy cars that a 16-year-old should never be allowed to drive. I fucking love cars, and I've wanted to do a car-chase movie all my life.

Q3

PLAYBOY: Correct us again, but it also appears that your superhot, superfamous co-star and fiancée, Kristen Bell, was actually buckled in alongside you.

SHEPARD: For every bit of it. Naturally the producer had booked a stunt double, but Kristen said to me, "No. If you're driving through a barn and jumping other cars, I need to be in there with you. We're going to go out together."

Q4

PLAYBOY: She sounds like a keeper.

SHEPARD: Kristen's a good girl. She grew up very Christian, went straight to college, did great in school and started work immediately. She's charitable and philanthropic and rescues dogs. So when we met, our backgrounds were opposites. All the things I'd done were terrifying to her, and she had a hard time believing I would ever be able to stay married and monogamous and a father and all those things. For the first year and a half we were together that was what we battled over almost weekly.

Q5

PLAYBOY: How terrifying were you exactly?

SHEPARD: It's so weird when you turn 18 and are released into the world and then just start piling on terrible habits. From 18 to 29 I was a heavy smoker, heavy drinker, drug addict, terrible eater and philanderer. The past eight years, since I got sober, have honestly been about trying to peel back each of those habits, to get back to the 12-year-old kid inside who was tremendously excited about life.

Q6

PLAYBOY: Give us a snapshot of you in your party years.

SHEPARD: I just loved to get fucked-up—drinking, cocaine, opiates, marijuana, diet pills, pain pills, everything. Mostly my love was Jack Daniel's and cocaine. I was famous for going out on Thursday night to have a couple of beers, and that just led all the way to Saturday night. I would meet people here and there, and then I'd be in a hotel room with four strangers. Oh, they're tapping out? Well, someone new showed up. Well, what's your name? Yeah, I'd love to go dancing. I lived for going down the rabbit hole of meeting weird people. Of course, *(continued on page 150)*

THE ARTIST

THE COLORFUL WORLD OF MISS OCTOBER

It's an indisputable fact: Art envelops every aspect of Pamela Horton's life. "I embrace any art form," says the 24-year-old multimedia artiste from Kansas. "I've delved into everything—acrylics, pastels, sculpting and even glassblowing." Inspiration has a tendency to strike her at will. "When I hear a song—especially a Queen song—I picture an image in my head that I must immediately put down on paper. I've also always loved video games and comic books, so when I paint in oil, I start with something realistic, but it inevitably scoots off into cartoon territory. I'm definitely prone to the fantastic!" Pamela actually began her career on the other side of the canvas—as a nude model. "There are very few nude models in Kansas because it's such a conservative place. But I think the human body is God's greatest artistic creation, so I have always been totally comfortable posing nude. I see myself—and everyone else—as a piece of art." Since we consider Pamela a masterpiece, we enlisted her for our cover in addition to her duties as Miss October. "I've had many blessings in my life, but this double whammy is the biggest of them all," says Pamela, who attended Wichita State University for two years with the intention of becoming a children's art therapist. "I loved school, and I'm dying to return," she says. "But for now, my head is reeling from the opportunity before me. Catch me before I faint, because this is the most emotional moment of my entire life!"

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNY FREYTAG

See more of Miss October at
playboy.com.

MISS OCTOBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Pamela Horton

BUST: 32C WAIST: 22" HIPS: 35"

HEIGHT: 5'7" WEIGHT: 110 lbs.

BIRTH DATE: 05/04/88 BIRTHPLACE: Whittier, California

AMBITIONS: To work for a well-known video game company as a character designer. Acting wouldn't be bad. ☺

TURN-ONS: A man (or woman ☺) with a strong physique who isn't afraid to hit the gym with me!!

TURNOFFS: Guys who can't appreciate a person for who they are on the inside. Thanks for thinking I'm pretty, but this girl is looking for a real connection.

FELINE PALS: I would not be able to survive without snuggles from my three cats, Moose, Squirrel and Turtle.

MY CONFESSION: I am obsessed with MMOs! I love being known as every gamer guy's dream. It makes me feel sexy!

MY FAVORITE ARTIST: My father. He definitely has a unique vintage style. I learned from the very best!

MY HERO: Freddie Mercury, the creative mastermind!

Cuddling Moose, my guard Kitty!

20th birthday party.

I challenge you to a duel! ☺

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Were you faking it last night?" a man asked his wife.

"No, darling," his wife told him. "I really was asleep."

A woman and her boyfriend were having an argument. The woman screamed at him, "Leave! Get out of this house!"

Resigned, the boyfriend headed for the door. But the woman continued. "I hope you die a slow and painful death!" she yelled.

He turned around and asked, "So now you want me to stay?"

Did you hear about the blind hooker?

You have to hand it to her.

I've got good news for you, ma'am," a doctor told one of his patients.

"Oh, please don't call me ma'am," said the patient. "I'm too young, and I'm not even married yet."

"Oh," said the doctor. "In that case, I have some bad news for you...."

One evening two nuns were walking down the street when a vampire jumped out of an alley and headed toward them.

"What should we do?" one of the nuns asked the other.

"Show him your cross," the second answered.

"Okay," the first said. She then turned to the vampire and yelled, "You'd better not mess with us—I'm really pissed right now."

A despondent man was drowning his sorrows at a friend's house when the friend expressed concern about his overconsumption of liquor.

"Aw, leave me alone," the man moaned. "Nobody cares if I drink myself to death."

"I do," the friend replied. "You're drinking my booze."

Double standards are unfair: If a woman has sex with a bunch of men, she's called a slut; if a guy does the same thing, he's called a homosexual.

A man came down with the flu and was forced to stay home for a day. He was happy with the experience, however, because he learned how much his wife loved him: She was so thrilled to have him around that when a deliveryman or the mailman arrived, she ran out and yelled, "My husband is home! My husband is home!"

The best advice we can provide this Halloween season: Never moon a werewolf.

A man was unhappy with his wife's emotional swings, so he bought her a mood ring to gauge her temperament. He found that when she was in a good mood the ring glowed green, and when she was in a bad mood it left a big red mark in the middle of his forehead.

A man saw his ex at the mall. "I thought of you the other night while having sex," he told her.

"You must really miss me," she said.

"No," he said, "it just keeps me from coming too quickly."

My wife says picking my nose is disgusting," a man told his co-worker.

"So what?" the co-worker asked.

The guy answered, "Now I have to do it myself."

A good-looking woman was having a bad day at the tables in Las Vegas. Down to her last $100 and completely exasperated, she cried, "What in the world should I do now?"

The gentleman sitting next to her, feeling on the spot, calmly suggested, "Why don't you play your age?"

So she put all her money on 29, and when 36 hit, she fainted.

Send your jokes to Playboy Party Jokes, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or by e-mail to jokes@playboy.com. PLAYBOY *will pay $100 to the contributors whose submissions are selected.*

"Something threw a rock at me today."

The GAMING GOLD RUSH?

IN THE BOOM-AND-BUST BILLION-DOLLAR CELL PHONE VIDEO GAME BUSINESS, TODAY'S CINDERELLA STORY IS TOMORROW'S OLD NEWS. MEET THE PLAYERS—THE WINNERS AND THE LOSERS—IN THE MOST HIGH-STAKES GAMING BATTLE OF ALL TIME

By David Kushner
Illustration by Zohar Lazar

Early in 2012 the biggest story in the video game industry came down to one word: *booty*. "Booty" is among the word clues in *Draw Something*, the cell phone game that has swept the planet. To play, you choose a word from a list of three and then draw a picture of it on your screen. Once you're done, you send it to the phone of your opponent, who has to guess what you drew. It's kind of like Pictionary for the iPhone generation.

The secret of the game's appeal is that you can draw whatever you want. That gives it an edge over the other big games of our time—*Angry Birds, Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3*, etc.—because it lets you express your personality and, when words like *booty* come up, your twisted imagination. While a kid might draw pirate treasure, adults might sketch something more lascivious.

Although only some of the clues are double entendres, there are websites devoted to *Draw Something* porn (like Draw Something Dirty). As one player joked in a tweet, "I played *Draw Something* for about two days, then I remembered I could masturbate."

When a game is monopolizing people's masturbation time, you know it's a hit. Released without fanfare for iPhones and Androids in February, *Draw Something* became the biggest overnight sensation in recent gaming history. In its first couple of months, players downloaded it more than 50 million times, generating hundreds of thousands of dollars a day for *Draw Something*'s maker, OMGPOP—impressive booty for a game that cost less than six figures to make. In fact, six weeks after the game came out, OMGPOP—which had been on the verge of going out of business, another start-up tech firm headed quietly down the toilet—was bought by Zynga, the onetime video game publishing behemoth, for $210 million. There's even a TV show in development based on the game.

From left: The entrance to Zynga's San Francisco headquarters is called "the light tunnel"; Dan Porter, CEO of OMGPOP, a tiny start-up that Zynga bought for $210 million; Nolan Bushnell, the first superstar game creator.

In the beginning, the stratospheric rise of *Draw Something* was thought to epitomize the new gold rush that's turning mobile-game developers such as Dan Porter, *Draw Something*'s unlikely creator, into titans. Porter had one thing to tell the jealous game makers who disparaged his sudden success. "We're fucking making money," he said with a devilish grin when I interviewed him in April. "We're making a *lot* of money. We're the hottest company in tech. I'm like, 'Dude, we're destroying you!'"

But with so much money at stake, and so many players grabbing for it, today's rising star can burn out tomorrow. And by summer, gamers were asking if Porter would eat his words.

✶

Striking it big in video games is one of the most contemporary of American dreams. With nothing more than a cool idea and computer code, a geek in a hoodie can make hundreds of millions. The dream of technologically inclined college grads used to be to work in movies or on Wall Street. Today? Young adults out of Ivy League schools dream of hitting it big working in their basements.

The dream began in the early 1970s when Nolan Bushnell, a gangly young Mormon from Utah, launched the first great American video game company, Atari. Over the next decade—which became known as the golden age of video games—home and arcade hits from *Donkey Kong* to *Defender* seeded *Pac-Man* fever among the next generation of players.

With the personal-computer boom in the 1990s, intrepid coders rose to power by making and distributing games over the nascent internet. Start-ups such as id Software (creator of the seminal first-person shooters *Doom* and *Quake*) and Epic Games (maker of action hits *Unreal* and *Gears of War*) proved they could compete with the Nintendos of the world.

As id Software co-founder and self-made millionaire John Carmack once told me, "In the information age, the barriers just aren't there. The barriers are self-imposed. If you want to set off and go develop some grand new thing, you don't need millions of dollars of capitalization. You need enough pizza and Diet Coke to stick in your refrigerator, a cheap PC to work on and the dedication to go through with it."

The pizza and Cokes are paying off more than ever today but not in the way the major video game companies expected. Now that we're all living our lives on smartphones, game playing is migrating from our Xboxes and Wiis to our iPhones and Androids. According to a March 2012 report by the NPD Group, a market research firm, traditional video game sales dropped 25 percent, to $1.1 billion, compared with a year earlier. Even Nintendo, the most storied console maker in history, is taking a hit, with more than $500 million in losses in its latest fiscal year—its first reported loss in 30 years. Meanwhile, annual revenue from mobile games is projected to more than triple, from $5 billion today to $16 billion by 2016.

When people first began talking about the new mobile-gaming gold rush, all conversation came back to the elephant in the room—or rather the big red bird in the room. *Angry Birds*, the game that forged the market, flew in from out of nowhere (Espoo, Finland) three years ago to perch atop the iTunes charts. Despite its absurd premise—slinging birds at pigs—the game has become the go-to finger fix for cell phone addicts. The title has been downloaded more than a billion times and generated more than $100 million last year for its creator, Rovio, which, worth an estimated $9 billion, is now in the ranks of Finland's most-valued companies, alongside Nokia.

With that kind of money at stake, aspiring game developers have one question on their minds: How do they make the next *Angry Birds*, when odds are they're just going to lay an egg?

✶

There are a couple of things you notice when you walk into the Manhattan offices where *Draw Something* was developed. The first is the big red foam numero uno fingers with the word *Zynga* printed on the side. One morning this spring, the Zynga fingers were everywhere inside this bright, airy loft in SoHo. They were tacked to cubicles where 60-some employees pecked diligently at computers. They were resting on big red beanbags and piled on red and white pom-poms. There was plenty of celebrating going on after OMGPOP sold to Zynga. At the time the sale went down, Zynga was the gold standard of social gaming companies—the *in* crowd.

The other thing you notice is that each of the conference rooms is dedicated to a drug *(continued on page 142)*

STRIKING IT BIG IN VIDEO GAMES IS ONE OF THE MOST CONTEMPORARY OF AMERICAN DREAMS

"You'll find all the books on sexual self-help in this section."

KICKING OFF THE LEAGUE'S 93RD SEASON—SCANDAL, HUGELY ANTICIPATED ROOKIES AND OUR SURPRISE PICK TO WIN IT ALL

PLAYBOY'S NFL PREVIEW

BY RICK GOSSELIN

Football fans love stats. In these algebraic puzzles lie the answers to the game's most pressing questions. As the NFL's 93rd season gets under way, here are a few eye-openers. (1) It pays to be second best. It's been nine years since the best team in the regular season won the Super Bowl (the New England Patriots in 2003). The Green Bay Packers bulldozed 15 wins last season, then lost their first playoff game. The following teams all headed into the postseason in recent years with the best record and failed to win the Super Bowl: New England (14–2 in 2010; 16–0 in 2007), Indianapolis (14–2 in 2009 and 2005), Tennessee (13–3 in 2008), San Diego (14–2 in 2006) and Pittsburgh (15–1 in 2004). (2) There's a direct correlation in the NFL between tackling the quarterback and winning Lombardi Trophies. Six of the past eight Super Bowl champions ranked in the top three in sacks. Today's NFL is all about the passer and the pass rush. (3) Speaking of passing, Tom Brady (who threw for an AFC-best 5,235 yards and 39 touchdowns last season) is 35. Only four quarterbacks have won Super Bowls at his age or older: Johnny Unitas at 37 (1971), Roger Staubach at 35 (1978), Jim Plunkett at 36 (1984) and John Elway back-to-back at 37 and 38 (1998 and 1999). Will Brady stock Just for Men in his locker this year? Age hurts in the NFL. His rival Peyton Manning, who had career-compromising neck surgery last year, can relate. (4) Our final stat: the number zero. That's how many snaps two of the most exciting quarterbacks in the NFL have taken thus far—Indy's Andrew Luck and Washington's Heisman Trophy winner Robert Griffin III. The NFL is a never-ending series of surprises, but this is always true: Even the greatest players get old, and there's never a dearth of new talent ready to fill the highlight reels. Let the games begin.

THE BIG GUNS

NEXT-GEN QBS WILL TAKE ON THE VETERANS

TOM BRADY PATRIOTS

A fourth Super Bowl ring would tie the record. At 35, does he have the gas?

ANDREW LUCK COLTS

The most exciting rookie QB in years. The next Manning or the next Ryan Leaf?

ROBERT GRIFFIN III REDSKINS

Born in Japan, RG3 was the second overall draft pick—behind Andrew Luck.

PEYTON MANNING BRONCOS

Can he come back after neck surgery? As a Bronco? Time for kickoff....

ELI MANNING GIANTS

Big brother: one Super Bowl ring. Little brother: two!

AFC PICKS

EAST

DARK HORSE: The free-agent additions of Mario Williams and Mark Anderson give the **BUFFALO BILLS** some pass rushers. Things could get hot at Ralph Wilson Stadium this year.

MVP: Who else? **TOM BRADY.** He was better at 34 in 2011 than he was when he won three Super Bowls in his 20s. The older he gets, the better Brady plays. He was 27–5 as a starter in his last two seasons—but 0–2 in his last two Super Bowls.

CHAMPION: **NEW ENGLAND** once again. The schedule is light. The addition of wideout Brandon Lloyd gives Brady speed to stretch the defense, thus strengthening the dynamic tight-end duo of Rob Gronkowski and Aaron Hernandez. The Patriots have the longest stretch of dominance in the NFL, with eight division titles in the past nine seasons. This season will be no different.

NORTH

DARK HORSE: **CINCINNATI.** With ball hawk Dre Kirkpatrick the Bengals have added one of college football's slickest cornerbacks to an already top 10 defense. Will he be healthy? The Bengals will be hunting for their first back-to-back playoff seasons in 30 years.

MVP: **RAY RICE** is the game's most complete running back. He led all AFC backs in receptions last season and finished second in the NFL in rushing yards. No wonder the Ravens signed him to a new $40 million contract.

CHAMPION: The Steelers and the Ravens finished in a dead heat a year ago—one of the most exciting (and violent) rivalries in any sport. The Ravens have likely lost Pro Bowl pass rusher Terrell Suggs for 2012 with an Achilles tendon injury. That gives the edge to the **STEELERS.**

SOUTH

DARK HORSE: A summer-long contract holdout spoiled the 2011 season of former 2,000-yard rusher Chris Johnson and his Titans. He's back, and so is **TENNESSEE** as a playoff contender.

MVP: Houston's **ANDRE JOHNSON** is in the conversation with Detroit's Calvin Johnson as the best receiver in the NFL. The Texan wasn't healthy in 2011, and in Matt Schaub he has a quarterback with a rocket arm to get him the ball.

CHAMPION: The best team in Texas this year won't be America's Team. It'll be the **HOUSTON** Texans. Schaub's Lisfranc injury kept the Texans from realizing how good a team they could be in 2011—and yet they still made the playoffs. Like Johnson, Schaub returns healthy for 2012. Coming off their first division championship, the Texans are in the hunt again.

WEST

DARK HORSE: **OAKLAND.** An off-season program should give quarterback Carson Palmer the chance to get back up to speed as a playoff-caliber quarterback. The resurgence of star running back Darren McFadden, injured for much of last season, gives Palmer an explosive weapon out of the backfield.

MVP: **PHILIP RIVERS** is the only AFC quarterback to pass for 4,000 yards each of the past four seasons. At 30, the Charger still has plenty of tread left on his tires.

CHAMPION: **SAN DIEGO.** The 22nd-ranked defense gets a boost with three top draft picks. (Defensive end Melvin Ingram's arms are as big as fire hydrants.) If Rivers minimizes his turnovers, the Chargers will again be the best in the West.

DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIPS

AFC	NFC
HOUSTON	GREEN BAY
VS.	VS.
SAN DIEGO	NEW ORLEANS

SUPER BOWL XLVII

AFC	NFC
HOUSTON	GREEN BAY

HOUSTON OVER GREEN BAY

MATT SCHAUB
TEXANS
Ninety-eight career TD passes and counting.

AARON RODGERS
PACKERS
Last year: one of the best QB seasons ever.

NFC PICKS

EAST

DARK HORSE: When coach Mike Shanahan has a quarterback, he wins big. He won a Super Bowl as offensive coordinator of the 49ers in 1994 with Steve Young, then two more as head coach of the Broncos with John Elway. How quickly rookie Robert Griffin III progresses will determine how quickly the **REDSKINS** contend.

MVP: LESEAN "SHADY" MCCOY. The Philadelphia running back's 20 touchdowns led the NFL last season, and his 1,309 rushing yards ranked second in the NFC. McCoy is to the NFC what Ray Rice is to the AFC.

CHAMPION: PHILADELPHIA. The Eagles were the only team in the NFL to rank in the top 10 in both offense and defense in 2011. The defense is better this season with the addition of linebacker DeMeco Ryans. QB Michael Vick still has the most horsepower in the division.

NORTH

DARK HORSE: In Matthew Stafford the **DETROIT LIONS** have a quarterback capable of making a deep playoff run. And Stafford has Calvin Johnson, the best receiver in the NFL, in his arsenal. Youth and depth abound at Ford Field, and when rabid Detroit fans get behind a team, anything can happen.

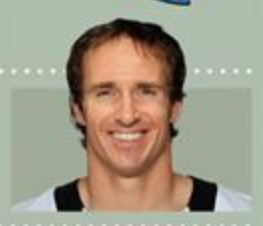
MVP: AARON RODGERS. Every major stat in 2011 was a career best for Rodgers, and his pass rating of 122.5 was an NFL regular-season record. Not only is Rodgers the best quarterback in the division, he's the best quarterback in the NFL.

CHAMPION: The **PACKERS** managed to go 15–1 last season with the NFL's worst defense. Green Bay used its first six draft picks to give that defense some teeth in 2012. As one draft critic put it, "Once again, the Packers own the NFL draft."

SOUTH

DARK HORSE: The **CAROLINA PANTHERS** expect a quantum leap from Cam Newton in 2012 after a banner rookie season. He passed for 4,000 yards in 2011 without really knowing what he was doing. Now he does.

MVP: DREW BREES. Now that he's a $100 million quarterback, the Saints expect him to play like one.



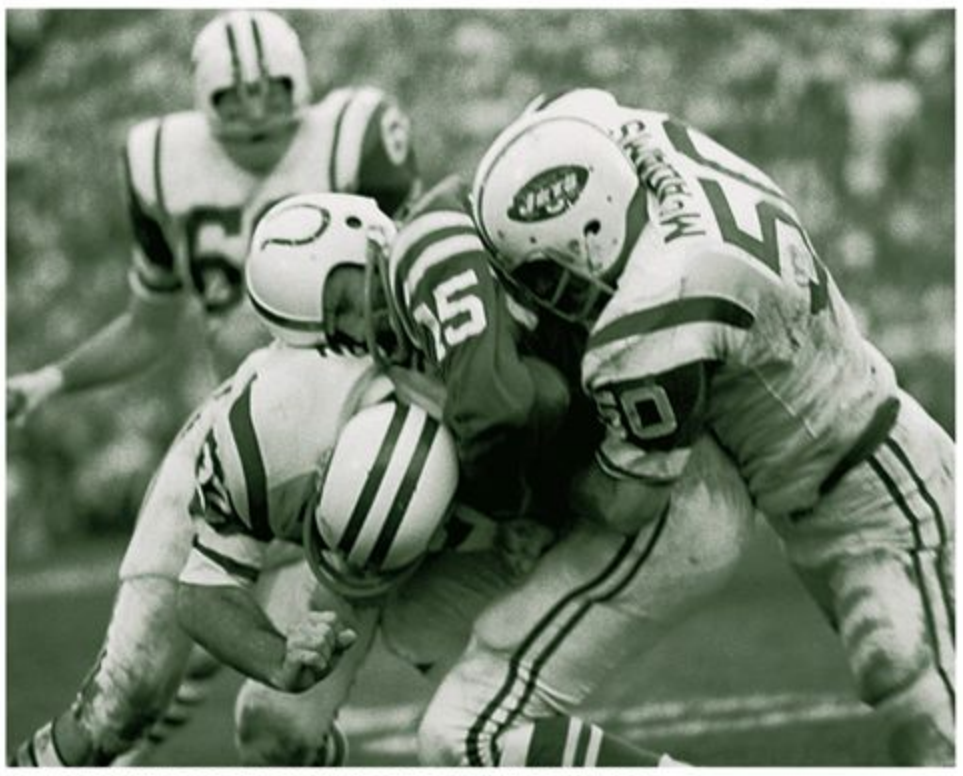
CHAMPION: The **SAINTS** have a chance to become the first team to play a Super Bowl on their home field. Losing coach Sean Payton and linebacker Jonathan Vilma to suspension in Bountygate, plus Pro Bowl guard Carl Nicks to free agency, will suck some wind out of their sails, but make no mistake: This squad is still stacked with all-stars.

WEST

DARK HORSE: The **SEAHAWKS** signed quarterback Matt Flynn in free agency and traded for former Pro Bowl tight end Kellen Winslow to pump up the NFL's 28th-ranked offense. In this anemic division, Seattle will battle for a playoff spot.

MVP: PATRICK WILLIS. Last season the 49ers fielded the best defense in the NFC and the most opportunistic defense in the NFL (38 takeaways). Willis is not only the top dog on this D but also the best linebacker in the NFL.

CHAMPION: The **49ERS** should again win the West. The team reached the NFC title game with the NFL's 26th-ranked offense a year ago. Coach Jim Harbaugh stockpiled some weaponry, notably first-rounder A.J. Jenkins and free agent Mario Manningham on the flank.



CAN PLAYERS BE PROTECTED FROM THEMSELVES?

HEAD FIRST

What would the NFL be without violence? Amid growing controversy over head injuries, we asked some current and former players

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell has faced unprecedented controversy in recent years. More than 2,000 current and former NFLers have launched lawsuits against the league, claiming it concealed information on head-injury dangers. Following the suicides of former players Dave Duerson and Junior Seau, Goodell and fans are left to wonder: Can the game be made safer?

"There's one thing that separates football players from everyone else—toughness," says Pittsburgh Steelers safety Ryan Clark. "We're willing to run into another man at full speed regardless of our health. I see what the league is trying to do to 'protect' players. But why are they doing it? To prevent more lawsuits? If you were concerned about the physical effects of playing football, you would have given up the sport a long time ago. In the NFL, it's that ability to have no regard for your own well-being for the sake of making a big play that separates the pros from the rest."

"I played 16 seasons in the NFL," says retired linebacker Bill Romanowski. "In my eyes, you can't make the game any safer. I was probably one of the first players in the history of the NFL who had to give up the sport because of repeated concussions. I had 10 documented concussions. But there wasn't a game I played in that I didn't see stars. Never. Yes, I knew the risks of playing football and that I was harming myself. I played the game knowing that my life would be a little shorter, because I got to play the greatest game on earth. And I would cut off my right arm right now just to run down the field on kickoff one more time."

Numerous players, including star Steelers defensive back Troy Polamalu, have admitted to lying about a concussion to get back on the field. Others have quit the game because they feared how their head injuries would manifest in the future, including Patriots cornerback Randall Gay (at the age of 30) and Rams lineman Jacob Bell (31). "It's common knowledge people are going to suffer," Detroit Lions center Dominic Raiola said in a recent interview. "Memory loss is going to come. I am ready for it. It's worth it, totally worth it. This is the best job in the world, and I wouldn't trade it for anything."—*Mike Dolan*

CTU

PLAYBOY'S COLLEGE FICTION CONTEST WINNER

Circuit Builders

FICTION BY DON PETEROY
UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

CHANNELSIDE WAS A DIFFERENT KIND OF REHAB, IT WAS UP TO EACH ADDICT TO FIGURE OUT HOW IT WORKED

ILLUSTRATION BY TONY DIMAURO

For the past 26 years, students have competed for the honor of winning PLAYBOY'S College Fiction Contest. This year, Don Peteroy of the University of Cincinnati wins for his story "Circuit Builders." Students of Marshall Arisman at the School of Visual Arts in New York also compete to illustrate the fiction; Tony DiMauro's winning entry is shown on the preceding pages. On this page, clockwise from top left, are illustrations by runners-up Rafael Alvarez, Federico Infante, Matthew Denton Burrows, Trip Carroll, Boyeon Choi and Natalya Balnova. For info on next year's contest, see page 132.

The drug addicts waited in the dining room. They admired the fireplace's granite base and marble mantle. "Bet it's beautiful when lit," said Ken, poking the tip of his shoe into the ashes.

They knew their fireplaces. Walter—a fallen IT consultant—had once owned an Osburn woodstove. Beth used to whore herself out to a venture capitalist who had a floor-to-ceiling fireplace. Philip expressed the exquisite comforts of a Royalton fireplace, the best model all around.

Rand stood among the antique couches and chairs on the room's opposite side. There were four indentations in the rug, impressions from furniture that had been removed recently. A coffee table, perhaps. He gripped a couch's walnut frame and put pressure on it, not enough to stress the wood but enough to gauge if years of temperature change had softened its integrity. He ran his fingers along the velvet. Still firm.

"How much is it worth?" said Brianna, approaching from behind. "You'd mentioned something about owning an antique furniture business. Or was that someone else?"

Rand felt uneasy around her. During orientation, she'd thrown the intake coordinator's pamphlets in the wastebasket, had hollered about his failure to honor an agreement they'd made. She'd wanted the *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* delivered to the rehab. He'd reneged.

"I'd say it's worth about $10,000." He picked up the needlepoint pillow and squeezed it gently.

"Christ, it's fancy here. The website didn't give that impression."

Rand recalled all those brochures that his wife had spread out on the kitchen table, places with names like Horizons, Care One and Freedom Academy. She'd insisted on Channelside because it was offshore and inescapable. Furthermore, the facility used an unconventional, but statistically impressive, French treatment methodology.

"It's a ploy," said Brianna. "I don't trust them. Tomorrow they'll send us to the real ward." She drew in her lips after each sentence. It made her freckles stand out.

The head counselor, Trey, arrived. His red beard was neatly trimmed. He directed everyone to the dining room. They sat, and orderlies wheeled out platters of food: barbecued ribs, potatoes with chives, mixed vegetables. The patients cut their potatoes in two, and the rising steam tickled their cheeks. Rand had no appetite. He'd taken his last Percocet from the secret supply in his basement 24 hours earlier. His hips throbbed, a precursor to paralysis. Soon he'd puke, shit and shiver, unless Channelside took the merciful approach—like other rehabs—and doped him up on Valium for the withdrawal's duration.

Trey said, "Welcome, everyone. I suppose you all introduced yourselves during intake?"

They looked at one another and shrugged.

"Then we're all settled in? Everything's gone smoothly?"

Silent nods.

Trey said, "Five minutes ago you were all yapping. Now everyone's timid. I'm not a fan of shyness or indifference, but it's typical. Most of you are probably skeptical about rehab, so you're going to try to act disengaged. It's self-protection. I'll tell you this: Channelside won't be what you expect. Most rehabs want their *(continued on page 126)*

"Follow the white rabbit."

SCENT

FALL FOR FRAGRANCE

Colognes are like clothes: They're designed to match the season—and the occasion. Here are the most spicy, woodsy, downright manly scents to spritz this autumn

1. YVES SAINT LAURENT L'HOMME LIBRE $60

In the world of cologne making, patchouli is not a hippie's shower replacement but a subtle, beguiling scent, as in this elegant French fragrance.

WEAR: to an awards ceremony.

2. VIKTOR & ROLF SPICEBOMB $75

Even before you smell the virile bergamot and pink pepper, you'll note the bottle looks like a grenade.

WEAR: when you need to kill it at the meeting.

3. CALVIN KLEIN ENCOUNTER $72

Rum, cognac, musk and jasmine make this scent extremely seductive.

WEAR: on a third date.

4. DOLCE & GABBANA POUR HOMME $73

A sultry whiff of tobacco and sage from the Sicilian design duo.

WEAR: in the presence of supermodels.

5. BULGARI MAN $79

Sandalwood, lotus blossom, white honey and musk. The black tie of colognes.

WEAR: to the opera.

6. TOM FORD NOIR $90

This cologne from the master of meticulous style has black pepper, leather and vanilla accents.

WEAR: in the VIP section of the club.

7. ACQUA DI PARMA COLONIA INTENSA $150

Bold, citrusy, spicy, woodsy and very Italian.

WEAR: on a yacht somewhere off the Amalfi coast.

8. JOHN VARVATOS ARTISAN $82

The flask-like bottle is rustic chic. The aroma is of tangerine and other cool-weather citrus.

WEAR: hiking in Napa Valley.

Photography by **DIMITRI NEWMAN**
Curated by **JENNIFER RYAN JONES**

TAKE NOTE

How to buy your signature scent

1. Stay away from the cute girl with the bottle:

Once you're tagged by a shop-girl with a bottle of cologne, you won't be able to smell any other options. Spritz a paper strip and you can test-sniff all you want.

2. Looks matter:

It may sound shallow, but you'd better love the looks of the bottle. Colognes last for years, so you'll be seeing it on your dresser a lot. It also sends a message to whoever might be visiting your bedroom.

3. Take lunch:

Once you've picked your favorite cologne, apply lightly—then go to lunch. If you still like the scent after you've spent some time with it and it's had time to dissipate, buy the bottle.

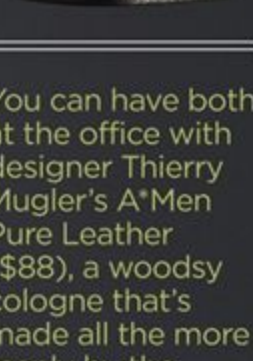
4.

5.

7.

6.

BUSINESS OR LEATHER?



You can have both at the office with designer Thierry Mugler's A*Men Pure Leather ($88), a woodsy cologne that's made all the more manly by the fact that it's aged in leather-lined tanks. This isn't the first time Mugler has broken the mold. A year before sprinter Oscar Pistorius—he of the carbon-fiber legs—made the Olympic team, the forward-thinking designer cast him as the model for his sport cologne A*Men Pure Shot.

PHOTOGRAPHY *by* ZACHARY JAMES JOHNSTON, JAMES TREVENEN *and* MATT WAGEMANN

GIRLS *of the* BIG TEN

OUR CRACK PHOTOGRAPHERS SWEPT LOW ACROSS THE MIDWEST, IN SEARCH OF BRAINS AND BEAUTY. LOOK WHAT WE FOUND—A BEVY OF BRIGHT ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS

The Big Ten conference is known for its math and statistics majors, so we thought we'd start our annual college pictorial with a pop quiz. How many schools make up the Big Ten? Of course, 12. As the second-oldest college conference in America, how many schools were in its original lineup? Yes, seven. How many varsity teams do these 12 schools have now? Bingo—298. Now here's an easy question: When you look at the women pictured here, what number pops into your head? A 10! Every one of them. Congratulations, you passed. Now let's get on with it. Herewith, the girls of the Big Ten.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY: *Sasha Camille*

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY: *Romana Lee*

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY: *Isabella Fox*

Clockwise from far left: Sasha Camille plans on being a clinical psychologist. We're ready for our therapy session. Ravishing Romana Lee is originally from New Jersey. As the Springsteen song goes, "Sha la la la, I'm in love with a Jersey girl." Isabella Fox plays tennis and works out a lot. She looks pretty fit to us. Bailey Kay loves "anything adventurous and crazy." Like posing for PLAYBOY, perhaps?

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY: *Bailey Kay*

UNIVERSITY of MINNESOTA: *Priscilla Yvonne*

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN: *Jazmin Stars*

Clockwise from left: Priscilla Yvonne loves cars, skateboards and *South Park*. Now that's our kind of girl. Although the Badgers are the biggest thing in Wisconsin, Jazmin Stars is more of an equestrian enthusiast. Ride 'em, cowgirl! Wildlife major Donna Michelle is one hot Boilermaker. And finally, here's Haley Sorenson, bringing up the rear.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY: *Haley Sorenson*

PURDUE UNIVERSITY: *Donna Michelle*

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY: *Marie Dawson*

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY: *Hanna Leigh*

UNIVERSITY of ILLINOIS: *Arianna Lee*

Clockwise from far left: Marie Dawson wants to work in the art world. She also dreams of being a Playmate. You never know. Hanna Leigh gets turned on by books, it seems. We'd love to be her study partner. Arianna Lee used to be called Giraffe because she was so tall. Looks like she grew into herself. How many Hoosiers does it take to fill a bubble bath? *Hmm....*

INDIANA UNIVERSITY: *Go Hoosiers!*

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY: *Reé Elliot*

Clockwise from above: Reé Elliot is one beautiful Buckeye. She digs boxing, shooting guns and modeling swimsuits. Brooke Cassidy is a real Tiger. She goes to Michigan, and she's a Detroit sports fan. Hannah Gappa wants to be an astronaut someday. We're seeing stars. Rachel Rockefeller dreams of being a supermodel. Looking good, Rachel—you're on your way.

UNIVERSITY of MICHIGAN: *Brooke Cassidy*

UNIVERSITY of IOWA: *Rachel Rockefeller*

UNIVERSITY *of* NEBRASKA: *Hannah Gappa*

CIRCUIT BUILDERS

(continued from page 114)

customers to return. They operate on the oil-change principle: in, out and back again in three months. Here, we obliterate your addiction."

Trey asked everyone to talk about their addiction histories and future goals. Philip and Walter were well rehearsed, long-winded and masterful with 12-step terminology. They'd wrecked their lives by freebasing cocaine—a gentlemanly euphemism for smoking crack. Ken's belly bled from Xanax abuse. Beth was addicted to "mind-altering men" and had regularly sold her ass for meth. Of all their stories, Brianna had rendered hers most artfully. She described a glass city of empty bottles in her basement, the smell of cobwebs and cheap red wine. Rand imagined her wandering helplessly among the towers, knocking them over and crying in the shattered glass. Rand's story, by contrast, was unimpressive: frustrated logistics, stolen prescription pads, memorized inscription codes and DEA numbers.

When everyone finished, Trey said, "The common denominator is that you've all lost the ability to choose when to stop. But if you think Channelside will give you an intellectual toolbox for combating temptation, you're wrong. Understanding consequences won't save you, but behavioral compliance will. Let me show you."

Trey produced a small bag from his shirt pocket. Everyone gasped. Rand estimated that it was an eighth ounce of marijuana, the good shit with red whiskers.

"What the fuck?" said Walter. Trey dumped the bag's contents onto the table. It stank like a gust moving over a swamp. He tossed a package of rolling papers to Rand. "Roll everyone a joint. Myself included."

"What? No way!"

"Let me get this right," said Trey. "You've about ruined your life, lost your marriage and business, but you still think you know better than a certified addiction counselor?"

Philip said, "This is a test. Don't do it, man." He crossed his arms.

Beth said, "A lesson on willpower. Or discipline. Or teamwork or something."

There was Brianna, looking down at her hands, ashamed. She must have caught herself entertaining the fantasy of smoking a joint in rehab. Rand had imagined it too, for just for second. There was a garden out back, a perfect place for getting buzzed.

Trey said, "You signed a contract agreeing to do whatever it takes to get sober, right? Then roll the fucking joints. This is what it takes."

Ken said, "It's a trap, Rand. He's using a technique called paradoxical intervention."

Brianna's eyes met Rand's. Do it, she seemed to be saying. Rand reached for the papers. It's not like he even wanted to be in rehab anyway. Ken mumbled something about reactance theory. Rand laid out the papers and sprinkled weed into the creases. The room was quiet but for the sound of paper crinkling in Rand's fingers. Nobody stirred. Trey grabbed a joint, wedged it between his lips and flicked a lighter. The paper sizzled as he inhaled. Smoke rolled out of the sides of his mouth. Rand still wondered if this was a trick. Maybe he'd smell potpourri or mint leaves.

They watched Trey take three puffs. Then, in one swoop, Brianna snatched a joint, lit it and pulled hard. "This is crazy," she said. "Am I in trouble?"

"Of course not," said Trey. Rand lit a joint. It was smooth going down his throat, feathery in his lungs. The buzz came within seconds, his vision sparkling.

Beth cleared her throat. Ken picked at his cuticles. Walter and Philip exchanged glances, seeking each other's approval. Trey said, "Enough ambivalence. If you all want to go huddle somewhere and talk it over, be my guest. We'll just smoke the rest." Their faces relaxed. Walter reached for a joint. Philip and Beth followed.

Ken narrowed his eyes at everyone. He said, "I'm here to get sober." Nobody responded. Fuck him. Sanctimonious asshole. Ken turned away.

Soon they stubbed out their roaches and sat back, stoned, while Trey expounded on the rehab's practices. "We at Channelside," he said, "choose not to offer classes on genetic predisposition and addict neurology. It's useless. There won't be any group therapy. No worksheets or moral inventories or confessional essays about your shitty parents. If you've come here to sit on a yoga mat and deep-breathe burning sage, leave. If you want God, go to church. See, in AA, they tell you to accept everything that happens to you as God's will. They want you to think acceptance means convincing yourself that the fucking you just got wasn't really a fucking—it was a message from your creator. We don't do that. We embrace our humanity. There's no other way to overcome addiction than to eradicate your guilt and shame and let yourself be the addict you are."

Be the addict you are. Yes, Rand thought. All of his troubles stemmed from trying to be someone other than an addict. Trey stood and said, "Tomorrow you'll be assigned a buddy, and we'll take it from there. When you retire to your rooms, you'll find on your nightstands an Ambien pill and a glass of wine. Sleep well."

Ken interrupted, "Hold on. How do you get away with this? Legally?"

Trey said, "Our legal advisor will be here Monday, if you need to speak——"

"How about you give me a phone and I call my lawyer?"

Brianna whispered, "No phones here."

Ken laughed, "Oh? And if there's an emergency?"

Trey said, "We take you back to land and bill you."

Trey turned and left the dining room. Once they heard his office door shut, they released their giggles. Ken, first to rise, rushed out. He banged on Trey's door relentlessly, until finally—and who knew how much time had passed?—he gave up.

•

Twelve hours later, Rand and Brianna were stoned and relaxing by the garden's pond. Nobody had expected the previous night's fortune to continue, but when the group filed downstairs for breakfast, they found freshly rolled joints on the table, along with wrapped gifts for everyone except Ken. He'd opted out of breakfast. The maid left a plate of waffles by his door.

Beth read aloud a note that Trey had left. He'd been tied up in another commitment but would be back later. In the meantime, he'd produced a list of buddy assignments. Naturally, Walter and Philip were teamed together. Much to Beth's consternation, she'd been grouped with Ken. "He'll emerge," Trey had written. That left Rand and Brianna. Beth read, "Being a buddy isn't difficult work. What you do is get high together."

They opened their presents. Walter and Philip got cocaine. Beth got Adderall. Rand got four Vicodins, and Brianna got a bottle of rum. The orange juice and muffins at the table went untouched. They slid their chairs out and dispersed.

Now at the pond, Rand and Brianna watched the swaying cattails, the ladybugs buzzing in the tall grass. Brianna gulped her rum. She drank immodestly, throwing her head back and tipping the bottle straight up. They laughed over the circumstances, but soon Brianna's merriment passed. "I know what's going on," she said.

Rand's mouth was sour from chewing the four pills. He swiped his tongue along his teeth.

"They're getting it out of our systems," she said. "The recklessness, you know?"

"Unlikely. We're becoming more addicted, actually."

She stretched out her legs and fanned her toes. Brianna's feet had a peculiar shape; her soles were so deeply arched that only her heels and toes touched the ground. Rand imagined that her body and spirit naturally strived upward, away. His wife's feet came to mind. They looked like uncooked sausages, the bloated veins around her ankles, the jutting bones and cracked-cement calluses.

Rand said, "The fact is, no matter how much I did, I never got tired of it."

They gazed at the pond, its surface smooth and asleep. Rand's eyes fell on Brianna's feet again, and she caught him looking. Her cheeks turned red. She wiggled her toes.

Rand said, "What do you plan to do when you get out?"

"Course prep. I'll have a couple more weeks before the semester starts."

"You're a professor?"

"A history professor. A drunk one. Lucky I didn't get fired. Kind of hard to do that to the country's leading expert

"Folks, check out this antique movie projector I picked up at a Hollywood garage sale."

on the history of U.S. involvement in Panama." She took the bottle to her lips.

"History fascinates me. Everyone, really. Whenever I sell a piece of furniture, I know that people buy it because they want its history."

She nodded, showing mild interest. He continued: "It's how I retain customers. For each item in my inventory, I trace its history as far back as I can. I print out a little booklet that explains where it's been. People want to be the last page in the story, the happy ending."

Brianna joked, "How many histories have you forged?"

"Most of them," he said. Laughing, their shoulders bumped. Rand hadn't realized they were sitting so close together. Brianna's proximity unlocked something inside him, a magnitude of excitement he hadn't felt in years. He could make it even better if he could score more Vicodin.

"Tell me about your wife," Brianna said, glancing at the last inch of rum in her bottle.

"She's out there and I'm in here. That's all there is to it."

Brianna shifted, moving away just a little. It meant nothing. She swallowed the remaining rum. "Fuck," she said, eyes honing on the few drops.

"What about you?" he said. "Are you seeing anyone?"

"Off and on. Whatever." She lay on her side and closed her eyes. Rand considered stroking her hair, but it'd be better to wait, let some days pass. He studied her back, its islands of pink blotches, probably symptomatic of her ailing liver. The blemishes didn't disgust him; rather, they looked artful, like bursts of paint.

She snored. He stared at her feet. He imagined the sound of her sandals creaking when she walked. Perhaps, during the school year, she kept her feet in privacy, behind fragrant nylon curtains, which she peeled off at night and discarded in a pile. He bent down, inspecting the creases on her heel. Tiny fissures, no more than a fiber's width. He opened his mouth and ran the tip of his tongue along the sole of her foot. Her rough flesh tasted like vinegar. Her toes curled. She stirred, then fell back asleep.

•

That evening, Trey summoned Rand to his office. Trey had one question: "Just for the record, have you ever licked your wife's feet?"

Rand tried to conceal his panic. His eyes darted around the office, falling briefly on a pile of manila folders. Trey reached into a drawer and pulled out a bag of baby carrots. He snapped one between his teeth. "Carrot?" he said, holding out the bag.

"No, thanks."

"Okay, then. Let's try again. Have you ever licked your wife's feet?"

"Were you watching?"

"We monitor the grounds. The dining room, the recreation room, the library. Liability's a bitch, so we take precautionary measures." He cracked another carrot in his mouth.

"I didn't realize——" Rand paused. "What about my bedroom?"

"You're safe there. Everyone deserves some privacy."

"Why should I believe you?"

Trey held the bag out again. "You sure you don't want a carrot?"

Rand shook his head. Trey continued, "You're not the first junkie with a fetish."

"I don't have a fetish——"

"Whether you do or don't, I'd like to know if you've ever licked your wife's feet?"

"Never even thought of it. It was a one-time thing."

"That's all I needed to know. Thank you."

Rand wrinkled his brow. Trey stared at him, the muscles in his jaw swelling, the carrot clamped between his molars splintering like brittle wood. Rand said, "Why are you asking me this? You should have been upfront about the surveillance. I feel violated."

"Violated? You licked Brianna's foot. Last I checked——"

"I was high. On drugs you gave me."

Trey laced his fingers together. "Then maybe we should try a different treatment option?"

"That's not what I'm saying. I just want to know——" Rand stopped himself. He had to be careful because Trey had the power to cut off his drug supply.

"To know what?" said Trey.

Rand was going to ask if Channelside had ever been sued, but now he knew better. "I want to know if you think my perversion signifies an issue I need to work through."

Trey said, "Nice try. It doesn't signify anything alarming. You exhibit predictable behaviors, all around. So predictable, in fact, that I know what you've been itching to ask me all day. You're sweating, Rand. Your face is losing color. I know what's really on your mind."

Rand said nothing. He felt ashamed for being so transparent. Trey continued, "Yes, we've got more Vicodin. That's what you want, isn't it? You don't give a damn about the embarrassment of having been caught licking a sleeping woman's foot. You want drugs. I say embrace your illness and just ask."

Rand reached for a carrot. "May I?"

Trey waved his hand. "Take them all. I'm not hungry anymore."

•

After midnight, while Rand was high and playing *Call of Duty,* Brianna arrived. She had a bottle of vodka. Rand let her in. Brianna was scratching her cheeks and grinding her teeth—sure signs she had used cocaine. She leaned against the wall. "You take your Ambien?" she said.

Rand looked at the nightstand. A single pill lay on a red cloth. "Are you asking me if you can have mine?"

She shrugged. Rand dropped the pill in her palm. "It works quicker if you eat it," he said.

She chewed the pill, chased it down with vodka, then wobbled over to the bed and sat.

Rand slid down beside her. "When I first started using pills," he said, "I'd swallow them, like you're supposed to. But you know how it is. Soon, the buzz wouldn't come quick enough. I started chewing them. The taste took some getting used to."

She stared at the TV screen, a paused image of a soldier running toward barbed wire.

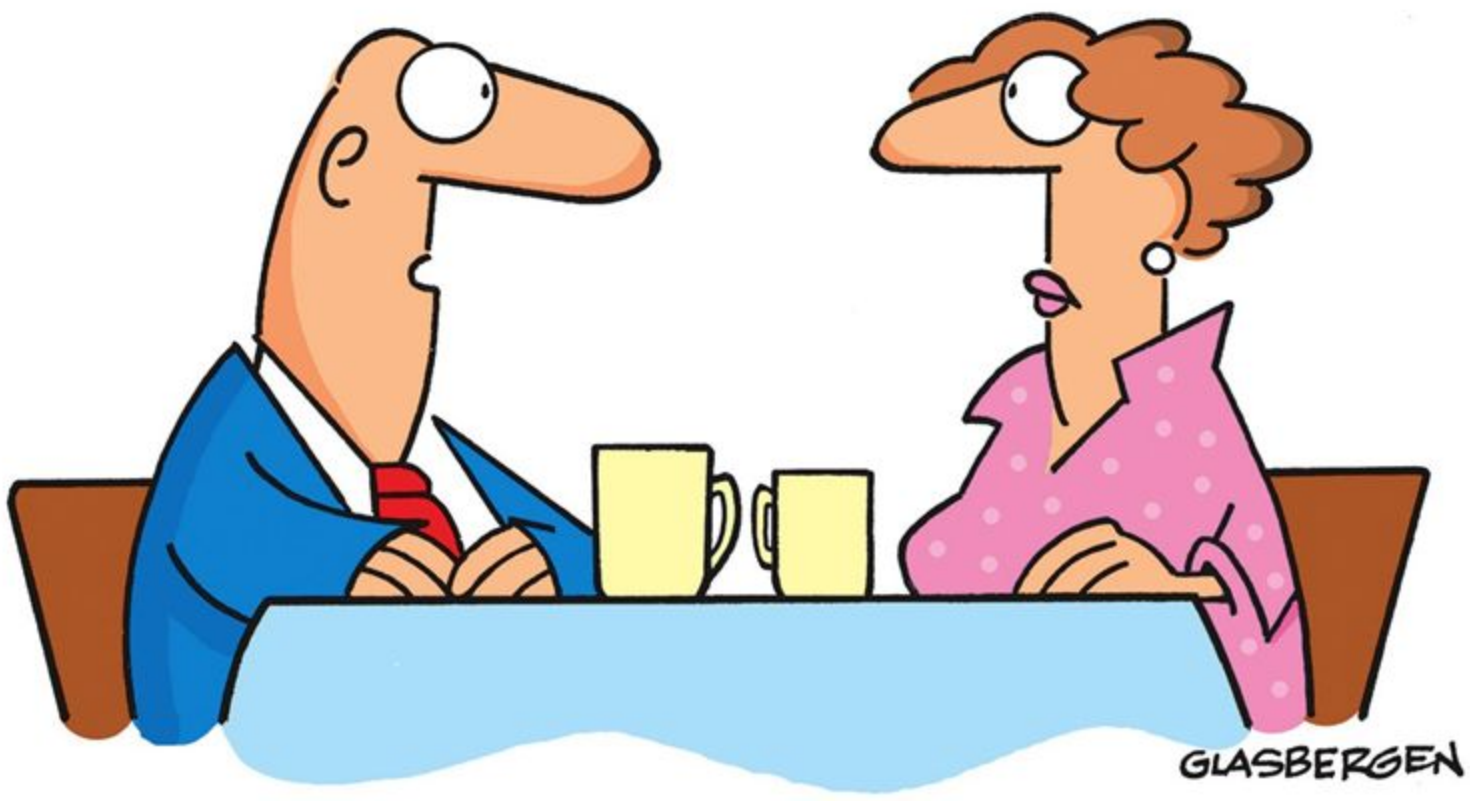
Rand said, "I eventually found I couldn't get maximum absorption fast enough. I started crushing them, wrapping the dust in strips of toilet paper and swallowing 'em. Parachuting, it's called. Sooner or later, I'll start using needles."

She didn't seem interested in his war stories, or anything, really. He wondered if all she'd wanted was his Ambien. Rand continued anyway. "Opiates saved me, really. I was the kid who always hung his head in shame. I wanted to be like Superman but couldn't even pass for Clark Kent. When I was 12, I broke my arm. The doctor gave me Vicodin. One pill and suddenly I felt like I belonged on this planet. I saw a big, glowing *S* on my chest. I've been chasing that *S* for over 20 years. Yet the more drugs I did, the smaller the *S* became." He lifted his shirt, revealing his chest. "See it there? See it?"

Brianna squinted.

"Me neither. The crazy thing is, I'm convinced that one day it'll come back."

She started to sag. It was steady at first, like a body swaying from a gallows. She attempted to sit straight but soon gave up.



"I'm not talking about cheating. I'm talking about outsourcing my romantic needs to a qualified third party."

She lay on her back and winced every time the ceiling fan's blades crossed the light.

Rand said, "You don't look well. What did you take tonight?"

"Some kind of speed. I wanted to stay awake."

"And you just took an Ambien?"

"Two," she mumbled. "Yours and mine."

Her eyes closed. Rand combed his fingers through her knotted hair. She probably hadn't showered in days. He found her deterioration erotic, the way she stank, her bloated face and parched lips. It was a beautiful kind of self-hatred that few could understand. Pressure built in his groin, a miracle. His penis had been inert since he'd started abusing opiates, yet this broken woman had the power to overthrow his impotency, even in her deepest stupor.

Initially, Brianna's trembling was slight. Nothing to be concerned about, just some spasms, her body wiggling itself into or out of the poison. But then her legs kicked the mattress, her head thrashed and she screeched. Her fingers twisted into the sheets and pulled them to her chest. Rand dialed Trey's extension. "Be right there," Trey said.

A nurse arrived quickly. Trey sauntered behind, pushing a gurney with a squeaky wheel.

"Stand aside," she said to Rand. She approached Brianna's quivering body.

"Is she okay?"

"I said stand aside." Rand stepped back.

They lifted Brianna onto the gurney, strapped down her arms and legs and rolled her into the hall. The wheel stopped squeaking, but the gurney rattled with Brianna's convulsions. Rand followed them toward the elevator. They waited, the elevator's gears grinding and air whistling between the doors. Trey put his hand on Rand's shoulder. "Good thing you called. Otherwise——"

The doors opened. They crammed inside and pressed against the walls. Spasms rippled up Brianna's arms, and bubbles of saliva formed at the corners of her lips. Rand looked away.

"Otherwise?" Rand said.

Trey said, "Otherwise what?"

The doors parted, revealing an infirmary no bigger than a cheap hotel room. The walls were concrete, mold blistering in the corners. A single lamp glowed over a heart monitor and a cabinet stocked with medical supplies. Apparently Channelside anticipated this kind of mishap.

They wheeled Brianna inside. Rand noticed a strange mechanism next to the operation table. Five feet tall, it looked technologically ancient, like a time machine from a 1960s sci-fi flick, with thick copper coils corkscrewing along its exposed interior, meters and lightbulbs, silver-dollar-size buttons and rows of red and blue levers. Electrodes dangled from a control panel.

The nurse hooked up Brianna to the heart monitor. Trey turned to Rand while she prepared the IV. "Listen carefully. We're going to let Brianna's heart stop for a moment."

"What?"

"This is a controlled resuscitation process. Perfected down to the second."

Rand winced. "You're going to let her——"

"Die. Yes. Now pay attention. From this point on, you're responsible for reviving her. And for teaching her how to revive you, in case you decide to overdose. Now"—the heart monitor screamed—"grab that wheel and start spinning it."

Rand hesitated, his lips puttering as he tried to form words. Trey said, "I'm 30 seconds away from making funeral arrangements. Twenty-nine. Twenty-eight."

Rand clutched the wheel. It wouldn't budge; grime and rust hindered its rotation. He threw his body into it, and the wheel released some of its resistance. Trey said, "You're generating electricity. This machine is a dynamo. An old one. We don't want to make this too easy for you. Upstairs, life's pleasant. Down here, you suffer."

After three revolutions, Rand wheezed. His palms were pink, like strips of uncooked salmon. His knees were buckling, so he squatted and pulled on the wheel. Meanwhile, the nurse held up a syringe. "This is a steroid," she said. "Next time Brianna overdoses, you'll need to inject her, right here." She jabbed Brianna in the neck and depressed the plunger. "The instructions are in the red binder."

Finally, Trey ordered Rand to stop. Rand gagged, backed away from the wheel and clutched his stomach. Had he not taken so many opiates, he'd feel crippled.

Trey said, "It's not break time yet. There are two defibrillator pads above the control panel. Take them and snap them onto the two wires there." Trey pointed to the electrodes that dangled from the machine. "Try not to touch the exposed copper. The lightning's for Brianna."

Rand followed Trey's orders.

"Place one pad on her chest, above her breast, and the other beneath her rib cage."

The pads adhered to her skin.

"Not perfect, but that'll do. Now, see that blue lever? Pull it down and let it bounce back up. That'll deliver the shock. You've got three good blasts, so go ahead, revive Brianna."

Rand worried that he'd spun the wheel one too many times and had generated just enough excess voltage to fry Brianna's brain. He took a last glance at her, then pulled the lever.

There was a pop. Brianna's body arched and her eyelids blew open. She looked startled. Then something settled over her, an expression that didn't fit her face. She crashed back down onto the gurney, and the heart monitor resumed its steady pulse.

"Congratulations," said Trey.

"She'll live?"

"If she decides to, yes."

Rand, bewildered, watched the nurse prepare an IV. "I don't understand this," he said.

Trey loosened the straps on Brianna's wrists. "With all the drugs in this place, it's bound to happen. Like I said, we take precautionary measures."

"She could have died." Rand took a step toward Brianna.

Trey held up his palm. "You're right. It's a shame; your buddy has no self-control. Poor girl. Good thing she's got you to look out for her. Now, we'll take the rest from here. You can head back upstairs."

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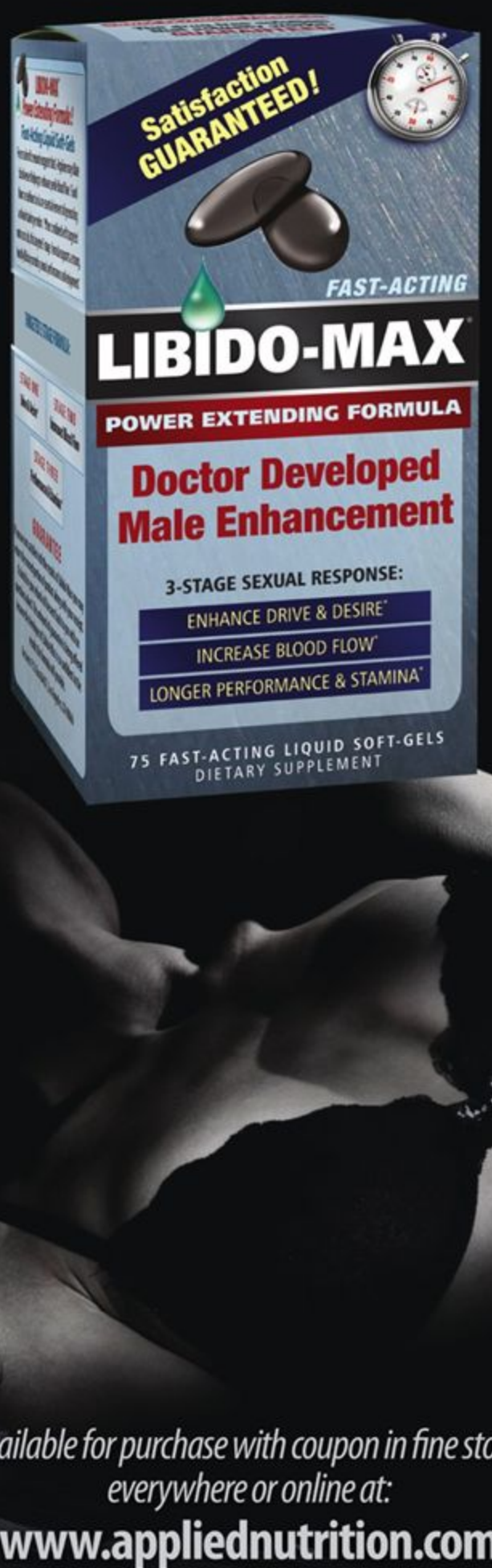

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Trey stared at Brianna. The nurse, holding a red tube, said, "Job's done, man. Go on."

•

The first OxyContin got Rand through the morning. Later, he crushed a 40-milligram pill and sucked its dusty essence up his nose. He was passing time, waiting for Brianna to rise from her stupor. He'd bring her tomato soup and maybe a few beers in case she was having the DTs.

At seven P.M. Rand went to the kitchen, heated Brianna's soup and pulled a Coors six-pack from the refrigerator. She'd appreciate it. He'd offer her a foot rub. He couldn't imagine her turning it down, not after he'd saved her life. He headed to her room, forgetting the soup.

Brianna's eyes looked sickly yellow. The veins in her neck were swollen from retching. She tried to apologize for last night's incident, but her voice was clotty and hoarse from having her stomach pumped. "It's okay," Rand said. "Just pace yourself from now on. Here, I brought this for you." He held up the six-pack. "I figured you'd want something to hold you over."

"I think I'm done, actually."

Rand felt stung. "Of course," he said, walking to the recliner. He put the beer on the floor. "I know how it is. Shit happens, and we go on the wagon. A month later, we've proved that we're not addicts, so we reward ourselves and get high. Then, it's back to the races."

"You don't believe me?"

"Sure I do. It makes sense. Last page in the story, right? Brianna gets sober."

She patted down a wrinkle on the bed sheet. "I nearly died. My experience isn't as simple as a booklet that comes with a piece of furniture."

He snapped a beer from the six-pack, sat in the recliner and rocked. "Do you mind?"

"I do."

"Okay then." He placed the can back on the floor. "Listen, I'm happy for you, I really am. Near-death experiences can be inspiring. Lots of well-written books on the matter. But you're a scientist, an objective thinker. You're emotional right now, and——"

She retrieved a magazine from the floor. Rand saw its title: *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology*. Her name was among three other contributors mentioned on the cover. She said, "This article. I wrote it three years ago. I haven't been able to write anything since."

Rand said, "Do you really think anyone can be scared into sobriety? If that kind of thing worked, we wouldn't need rehabs, right?"

She raised the blinds. The thick sea fog obscured the stars. Rand didn't care about her declining career. He just wanted her to get drunk. He wanted to lick her foot again, whether someone was watching or not. He wanted to fuck her, there on the recliner.

"I support you," he said. "But I can't let you do this because of fear. I'd be enabling you, knowing all along that sooner or later, fear will fail you. That's not the point of Channelside."

She glared at him. "Enlighten me, Rand. What is the point of Channelside?"

"To show us we're not addicted to drugs; we're addicted to the concept of more. Here, we're given the freedom to discover what enough means. We're not powerless, Brianna. We have a choice. It's not that hard."

"I'm glad you see it that way. Personally, I'm done." She walked to the door and opened it. "I need to be alone. Conversation's over, so please take the beer with you."

Rand lifted himself from the recliner and stomped toward her. "Really? What are you going to do all night? Get in touch with your higher power? Convince yourself you've had a spiritual awakening? Write apology letters to yourself?"

"Please," she said. "I want to be alone. Get out of my room."

He smiled and held out his hands to reassure her. "Settle down. I'm your buddy, not your enemy. I just want you to be true to yourself."

"Get out."

The door across the hall opened. Beth, in her nightgown, stared at Rand. "She's telling you to leave," she said.

The women waited. Rand picked up the beer. "Tomorrow," he said, "when your senses have returned, I'm coming back. We need to talk." He sneered at Beth, then walked out.

•

Rand couldn't sleep. Why couldn't Brianna recognize that her resurrection had originated in his body, had erupted from his soul? He'd spun the wheel. He'd generated the electricity. Why couldn't she appreciate that?

Rand got up and put on yesterday's clothes. He headed downstairs and exited the building. Outside, the air was misty, the morning's dew heating in the sun. He sat by the pond. The buttercups glowed rich and yellow, and the air carried a thyme fragrance. The bottle cap from Brianna's rum still lay in the grass. He picked it up. Maybe I should apologize to her, he thought.

Something rustled behind him. Rand turned toward the noise. There was Trey, pulling an ivy vine off an oak tree. "Didn't mean to startle you," said Trey. "This ivy's been bugging me for weeks. It's one of those evasive kinds that can fool a tree into thinking it's being embraced. Then the vine strangles the tree to death."

Rand squinted. Trey said, "Oh, don't look so confused. That was symbolic."

"You high?"

"Nope." Trey threw the vine into the bushes, then sat beside Rand. "Didn't expect you'd be out here so early."

"I had a rough night."

"Of course you did. Your buddy chose sobriety, and you don't like that. I've seen it a hundred times. Everything's predictable."

"Yeah? Then what usually happens next?'

Trey lifted his knees to his chest. "I don't want to give you any bad ideas."

"I'm sure there's a positive alternative. A favorable outcome."

"As far as I'm concerned, your problem isn't outcomes. It's present behavior."

Rand said, "I've been thinking about apologizing to Brianna for——"

"She doesn't need your apology. Actually, I'm assigning you a new buddy. Walter."

Rand felt a jolt. "Walter? Why? Didn't I save Brianna's life?"

"And now she feels threatened."

"Given her current condition, she's not the best judge."

Trey held up his hand. "Neither are you. You're with Walter. That's it."

"Don't you want to hear my side of the story?"

Trey stood and wiped down his pants. "Your side of the story got you into rehab."

Rand shook his head. "I'm going to

"So what's the big deal about the Secret Service? Everyone I 'service' is a secret!"

talk to her. She's just misunderstanding what I——"

"You'll stay away from her. You'll want to." Trey produced a Ziploc bag full of pills, their shapes immediately recognizable. He said, "Always obey the man with the drugs. Behavioral compliance." He stowed the bag back in his pocket and walked up the pebble path. He disappeared into the building's back door. Rand glared at Brianna's window. Her shutters were closed, but she was probably there, peering through the cracks, satisfied.

•

Rand and Walter sat on the couch in the community room, doing bong hits. They had important matters to discuss. Over the last 48 hours, electrocution had become a fad. First it was Brianna. Then Philip got zapped into submission. Now, they watched the lights flicker. It was Beth's turn; Ken had discovered her inert on the kitchen floor. Rand imagined Ken pulling the blue lever and Beth's back jolting toward the ceiling.

Walter packed the pipe. "None of this was unintended," he said. "You think Channelside hasn't orchestrated this down to the minute?"

"I don't know. That'd be pretty hard."

The bong water bubbled. Walter held the smoke in, his face pinched. He said, "Ever heard of systems theory? It's the big fuckin' trend right now for stock market analysis." He held up his finger, then continued. "We've got this massive system here, a sobriety-producing machine. We're the parts. Rehabs don't create sober people. Sober people create rehabs."

Walter took another hit. "But it's reciprocal because the idea of a rehab—its intended function—exists in everyone's mind from the outset. Once they step through the institution's doors, it causes a goal-seeking feedback loop between the system as a whole and its individual parts. The coherency we're seeing—Brianna, Philip and Beth all getting sober at the same time—is an emergent property. All that's needed to start the machine is an inciting incident. So they give us drugs. The minute one of us overdoses—Brianna, in our case—the machine's alive, and all the parts start creating synergy, working together. Boom, you've got a rehab."

Rand said, "You're assuming that Channelside's goal is to get us sober. I'm under the impression that we're learning moderation."

"Channelside's goal is whatever the people's goal is, and we're outnumbered."

Rand took the bong. "I'm not giving in."

"You and I can say that now, but one thing about systems: They're inherently self-correcting." He handed Rand the lighter. "You might start feeling the urge to correct yourself."

•

The sobriety seekers met in secrecy, held AA meetings and chanted the serenity prayer behind the community room's closed door. Rand didn't feel tempted to join, despite how he ached to see Brianna, to touch her. He wanted to tell her the truth, that she's on an island and her sobriety is conditional, insulated, destined to fail anywhere else. He wouldn't expect her to listen, but maybe, if he played her right, if he'd fall to the ground weeping, she'd cradle his head against her little breasts and whisper, "One day at a time," or some other shit-for-brains platitude. She'd promise to stand by his side, and soon his hands would move down the hollow of her back, her frantic breath fanning across his face, his lips brushing her neck, mouths coming together; punishment, so much punishment, curving together into their curled bodies, her legs in the air, her ankles on his shoulders, her toes walking up his chin, pressing against his jaw, digging into his lips, parting them, his moans stifled and throat gagging. It was possible. He just needed to establish the right spiritual connection. Brianna's soul had been ignited, electrified, but his had not. The circuit was incomplete; electricity emerges only when there's a path between two oppositely charged poles, anode and cathode, one alive by virtue of the other. Break the circuit and there's oblivion. Rand realized his union with Brianna was contingent on one predicament: She'd have to administer his resuscitation. And in order for that to happen, he'd have to both overdose and escape Walter's scrutiny.

•

Three days, three saved Ambien pills. Two nights of scheming in his room, moderating his opiate abuse. On the third night, after sprinkling the powdered-down pills in Walter's bottle of red wine, Rand was buddy-free. He drank Walter's whiskey and snorted his cocaine. The sharp grains rattled in his sinuses because he'd cut the coke too hastily. The chewed-up OxyContin numbed his tongue, and the clonazepam, taken sublingually, dissolved into an acidic slime.

He wobbled out into the hall and sat by Brianna's door. He could hear her television: a commercial for *Apollo 13* commemorative plates, a nasally lawyer promising financial rewards for work-related injuries. Soon the hall's lights pulsed. His vision wavered, then became pixelated, as if broken glass coated his eyes. Something in his brain erupted, a feeling like a spike driven through his skull from behind. This was too intense, too painful. He curled over. Brianna's door swung open. "Oh my God!" she screamed.

"Help," he said.

She looked down the hall, probably wondering why Walter was absent.

In the elevator he was on his hands and knees, saliva swinging from his chin, heart thrashing against his ribs. For the first time in years, Rand wondered if he might die. The fear evoked an image of an untimely frost that had spread over Maine in July 1978, when he was a child. His mother had looked out the window at the ruined flower beds, then down at Rand, as if they were one and the same. Yet now, despite the chill spreading over his body, his bleeding brain

and certainty of death, the fact remained: Rand wanted more Vicodin.

•

The shock felt like a bee sting. The better part of the pain had disappeared into the nothingness that marked Rand's brief death. Awake, alive, he sensed the static's hum dispersing through his body. There was Brianna, panting, and Trey, a blur in the background. It had worked.

Trey whispered, "Next, we pump his stomach." Brianna cradled a coiled-up hose. The nurse pried open Rand's jaw, and Brianna snaked the tube down his esophagus. He gagged; it tasted like a mouthful of rubber bands. She fed it slowly, hand over hand, as if unraveling the tube from her own stomach. An umbilical cord, he thought. She'll never want to let me go.

Trey flicked a switch on the suction machine, and Rand felt like he'd received a quick jab to the gut. His insides shriveled. Brianna, mortified by the sudden stench and the machine's gurgling, turned her head and cried. Trey put down his clipboard and embraced her.

"I want to go home," she sobbed.

Trey's hands stroked her back. He said, "Soon. It won't be long."

•

Autumn in Maine can seem so dour. Rand avoided his house as much as possible. The rooms echoed, and the cold drafts passed through too freely. He kept the store open until 11 P.M., though nobody came that late unless they were avoiding rain during their long walks home from the paper mill.

One afternoon Rand saw someone rushing in the downpour toward the shop. A minivan's hazards flashed across the street. When she took cover beneath the awning and closed her umbrella, Rand gasped. His breath solidified in his throat. Brianna opened the door. The fliers and forgotten receipts tacked to the nearby corkboard fluttered in the gust. She stood still, water dripping from her umbrella. Then she looked at Rand, her face expressionless. Rand remained behind the cash register. He said, "If you're about to tell me that you're just passing through——"

"I'd be lying," she finished. "This really is the middle of nowhere. I don't know how you ever found drugs out here."

"I had a sympathetic doctor in Portland. Made a lot of calls to the pharmacist."

"Seen him lately?"

"No," he said. She walked toward the register. Here was a changed woman. She looked professional, her hair tied back and shining like polished wood, a black skirt and blue silk top, and a layer of makeup. Her perfume's scent reminded Rand of a candle shop. Rand grasped a roll of quarters and spun it in his palm. "I never expected to see you again," he said.

"There are things we have to do in order to stay well." Her eyes moved down to where a button was missing on her collar. She snipped the hanging black thread between her fingernails.

Rand said, "I gather that this is part of your ninth-step amends?"

Her head bobbed. "I made a commitment to go to any lengths to stay sober. The Big Book says we must not shrink at anything. We make direct amends wherever possible, except when to do so would——"

"I know my AA, Brianna, and you don't owe me amends. I was crazy and belligerent."

"We were all sick. And I hope we all recognize that and forgive each other."

He smiled and put the roll of quarters on the counter. "I still think about you a lot."

She had no reply. She squinted sideways, a gesture of nervousness.

Rand continued, "Had we met under different circumstances, I have no doubt that——"

"Stop. You're idealizing me. You never even knew me, and I'm not here for this."

"We brought each other back to life. That's important, isn't it?"

She said, "Right, but we're not indebted to each other."

He looked at the cash register. It'd been empty all week. He said, "I'm working on letting go. It'll take time. I'm a slow learner. Maybe we can go out for some coffee and talk."

Brianna nodded. "I can't stick around for long. I'm just here to give you something." She pointed her key chain toward the van across the street. The van's back opened.

Rand squinted. "What is it? I can't see that far."

"It's my symbolic token of forgiveness. The resuscitation machine."

Rand stood. "From Channelside? Goodness, how did you get that?"

"They were shut down. You didn't know?"

"I ignore my mail."

"Class-action lawsuit. Your buddy Walter——"

"Whenever a lawyer called, I figured it had to do with my ex. I never answered."

They went outside. The cold rain blew sideways. They shielded their eyes. There was the machine, on its side, its coiled copper wires, lights, meters, terminals and wheel. Brianna said, "If you ever plan on relapsing, maybe this will inspire you to reconsider."

They positioned the machine on a dolly and wheeled it into the shop. Rand moved aside an old bureau in one of the storage rooms, and they shimmied the machine into the open space. Then, stepping back, they gazed at it in silence. Brianna wiped the dust off her skirt. Across the street, the pizzeria's lights turned off for the night. She rattled her car keys, signaling it was time to go. She'd done what she'd intended, and now it was on to someone else. Saddened, Rand said, "Will I see you again?"

She looked at him warily.

"You don't have to say it. I understand."

He led her to the door. Brianna stepped into the rain and crossed the street. Rand stood by the window and watched as she lifted herself into the minivan. She closed the door, idled for a second, sipped from a thermos, then drove away. His breath clouded the window.

•

The machine was dirty. He ran a rag over its control panel and around its copper coils. Tomorrow, he'd pick up some WD-40 and spray along the wheel's joint and maybe replace the lightbulbs. He tossed the rag aside and turned the lights out. He headed back to the sales room, his hands in his pockets, his fingers separating the pills from the lint, his mind unsure whether he'd stashed the needles in the cash register or left them atop the broken grandfather clock.

Don Peteroy is a Ph.D. candidate in the creative writing program at the University of Cincinnati. His novella, Wally, is forthcoming from Burrow Press.

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LEE CHILD

(continued from page 64)

ambitions. What sort of career does that qualify you for?

CHILD: I went to work for Granada TV in Manchester, in the northwest. It's one of England's five major stations. We did dramas that everybody remembers: *Brideshead Revisited*, *Cracker* and *The Jewel in the Crown*. It was a thrill to be part of that institution. I was there 18 years.

PLAYBOY: What was your job?

CHILD: Most of my career I was a presentation director, working in what in America is called master control. There were five of us on staff, one of us there at any time, night or day. We were responsible for the composite output of the station. What passed through our control room went into people's living rooms. We assembled the broadcast. We had legal and editorial responsibility for its content. If something was wrong or if there was an emergency, we dealt with it. We dealt with regulatory issues, which at that time in Great Britain were extensive. If there was a news report about famine, we couldn't air food commercials. It was a complex job on multiple levels and therefore well paid. We were union workers, but we received enormous salaries. As a rule of thumb, we felt good if our salary surpassed that of the prime minister. It always did.

PLAYBOY: Why did you leave?

CHILD: I was fired. But it was not a case of being called into the office. It was a drawn-out process. Thanks to Thatcherism, the TV regulatory system was being dismantled. It stood in the way of profit. The only way for management to achieve this dismantling was to break the union. There was a long-standing shop steward due to retire. Word came down that anybody who stood for the vacancy would never work in the industry again. Management thought the union would be leaderless and an easier target. I felt that was wrong. This was my real-life Reacher moment. I put myself forward as shop steward. I was elected unopposed, obviously. But it was worth doing, because the union employees at Granada were decent people who'd worked in an insular business and had no chance in the competitive market. It was the end for a lot of them. Someone had to make sure they were outplaced properly. I started naive. Quickly management pulled some illegal stunt. I thought, All right, if you want to play dirty, I will too. For a couple of years it was guerrilla war. Management left the building at five, and as soon as they were gone a team I put together went to work. The cleaners searched their trash, bringing me torn-up memos. We taped them back together. The engineers hacked into their computers. We steamed open their mail. We won loads of battles, but we lost the war, and for me it was desperate.

PLAYBOY: So you're unemployed, 40 years old, and you decide to write a novel. That's crazy.

CHILD: It was. But I'd been a big reader all my life. Five years earlier, I'd read John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee series. I loved the series as entertainment, and I began to see how the books worked. When I was let go, I thought, I'm going to write books. It was clear as day to me. I was playing a trick on myself. I felt if I contemplated how unlikely it was, I would never get it done. On a Friday I bought legal pads and pencils, and I started writing on Monday. I was angry and in a hurry, and you see that in the first book—the urgency and the fury. I had only seven months of living expenses in the bank.

PLAYBOY: Did your family help?

CHILD: They were great. My wife is American. We met at Sheffield, where she was also a student. She was gorgeous and exotic. I was totally smitten, and we've been together ever since. At the time I lost my job, she was working part-time in a government tourist-information bureau. She stepped up to five days a week. My daughter Ruth, who was then 14, went out and got a waitressing job at a local tea room.

PLAYBOY: Why did you change your name?

CHILD: In show biz in Britain it's common for people to work under names that are not their own. The stage management union, which is the same thing as Actors' Equity, has a rule that you cannot use a name if it's similar to an existing member's. When I started, there was a character actor with the same name as mine. This was routine for me, but the decision was also about reinvention.

PLAYBOY: Why did you choose the name Lee Child?

CHILD: In our household wordplay is rampant. My wife and I were once riding a train out of Grand Central. A seatmate, noticing my accent, tried to establish kinship by telling us he drove a foreign car, a Renault Le Car. But he pronounced it "Lee Car," which immediately entered our lexicon as an all-purpose definite article. It was "Lee this" and "Lee that" forever, including "Lee Baby" when our daughter was born, which became "Lee Child" as she grew up and which I adopted as my moniker.

PLAYBOY: Do you still think of yourself as Jim Grant?

CHILD: If I'm doing a Jim Grant type of thing, like licensing my car. My passport says James Grant. But almost all of what I do now is based on the books. I generally think of myself as Lee Child.

PLAYBOY: Your most radical decision may have been to set your books in America and build them around an American hero. Don't writing teachers always tell students to write what they know?

CHILD: In my head, I was in America, and I'd been there a long time. As a kid I was obsessed by it. Britain's postwar economy was exhausted, but America had Buicks with large fins and loose suspensions. It was reckless excess, and it looked wonderful. There was so much joy. There were no inhibitions.

PLAYBOY: It's one thing to be fascinated by America. It's another to claim it as your literary territory.

CHILD: The Reacher books had to be set in

America. To write about a knight errant has certain requirements, one of which is a large and dangerous landscape. Long ago Europe was exactly that—the Black Forest. In the Middle Ages Europe was the right place for a knight errant. But Europe became built-up, and that whole string of myths died. It had to migrate to where there was a frontier.

PLAYBOY: Was there also a commercial consideration?

CHILD: It's like John Lennon said: If you lived at the time of the Roman Empire, you should have been in Rome. In our time, you should be in America.

PLAYBOY: The Reacher books typically convey a love of America. Are you patriotic about the country?

CHILD: Being an immigrant, I'm intensely patriotic about America. First of all, I love the diversity of the people. This is a mongrel race, and you find tremendous vitality in that. I like the vivid features people have. Even if somebody's not beautiful, they tend to be vivid—dark skin or big, dramatic eyes. Americans are much more vital than the inbred, pasty-faced people of Britain. But most of all what I love about America is that there's a strand of decency and normality in almost everyone. Generally speaking, Americans are full of kindness and generosity and goodwill.

PLAYBOY: Reacher is an anomaly—a crime-fighting ex–military officer who, despite his penchant for violence, is a lefty. In *The Enemy,* your eighth book, he takes on an unnamed but identifiable conservative icon.

CHILD: It's Dick Cheney, who at the time that novel is set was secretary of defense. The Cold War has ended, and the established order is going to be shaken up within the Army. The issue is the armored divisions, these magnificent spearheads designed to fight the Red army. Reacher gets involved, and I show Cheney being corrupt and incompetent. People regard him as some kind of Svengali. He is good at political infighting, but otherwise he's a man of no distinction. I think he did us irrefutable harm.

PLAYBOY: People know about the Reacher Creatures. Are there Reacher Bashers?

CHILD: The one time I got an absolute shit storm—terrible hate mail—followed the publication of *Nothing to Lose,* the 12th Reacher novel. The book is critical of the Iraq war, and it contains a brief disquisition on how loyalty in the military is a two-way street. If the men and women serving are to obey government orders, then the government owes it to them to make correct decisions. The offending passage concludes that if the government has let our men and women down, then desertion is not a terrible thing. It's just 19 lines, yet it drove the Rush Limbaugh types crazy. A day would not go by when I would not get a package containing these pages torn out of the book and torn up or, several times, used as toilet paper. The irony is that the lines are taken word for word from e-mails I received from soldiers in the Middle East. The reality of military service is that soldiers are in trouble some of the time, but most of the time it's boring. They're inside their compounds with nothing to do. They watch DVDs and play video games. When they run out of these, they read books. Mine are some of the books they read, and because they've got all this time and they're in this sealed-off world, they go online and e-mail me. At first it's conventional fan mail. Then they start bantering. Delta Force e-mails from Afghanistan: "We could kick Reacher's ass." I write back: "No, he'd kick your ass." Then it goes into a strange phase when they have this imagined intimacy with me because they have nobody else to tell their fears and thoughts. They're not going to tell senior people in the chain of command, and no soldier tells his family. That's where I got the passage about desertion—soldiers' e-mails. I put it word for word in *Nothing to Lose* because it's authentic and because, in an oblique way, it gives voice to people who have none.

PLAYBOY: Do most armed forces members like your novels?

CHILD: It's dependent on rank. Reacher, as you know, was a major, and majors on down love him. They see the potential. Lieutenant colonels and above hate him. They feel it would be a nightmare to have him in their unit.

PLAYBOY: You're a rarity—a popular novelist who is taken seriously. How do you think of yourself?

CHILD: I think of myself as primarily an entertainer. I never think of myself as a literary figure. That said, I expect good reviews. If a restaurant serves quality food at affordable prices with good service and decent surroundings, it should get good reviews. And that's what I'm doing—supplying a diligently made product.

PLAYBOY: What writers in your genre do you admire?

CHILD: John Grisham. I think he's a sophisticated and intelligent writer and that each of his books interrogates the art, experiments to see what fiction really requires. *The Runaway Jury* has no pleasant characters. You don't care about any of them.

"These self-made businessmen are all alike—they all want to start at the bottom and work their way up."

All you've got is a central question—what will the verdict be?—and it carries you through. I also like Michael Connelly. He passes what I call the three-minute airport test. If you're changing planes and have three minutes at the bookstore, grab a Connelly. He never lets you down.

PLAYBOY: What writers in your genre do you dislike?

CHILD: Vince Flynn and Brad Thor. They are essentially contributors to a kind of right-wing bubble. They play to the enthusiasms of the pro-torture audience. Glenn Beck has featured them on his shows. I also don't like David Baldacci. He's just overrated.

PLAYBOY: How have your parents responded to your success?

CHILD: My father disapproves of practically everything I do. I'm not Calvinist enough. I buy luxury items. I don't work in a middle-class job. He's 88 now and probably won't make it to 89. He's part of Tom Brokaw's "greatest generation." At the age when I was in college having a good time, he was fighting across Europe as an engineer repairing tanks on the front lines. But it was also a bizarre generation—pinched and unsuited for postwar prosperity.

PLAYBOY: Have you developed expensive tastes?

CHILD: For me, money buys convenience. If I want to go somewhere and there's an expensive flight I want at 10 o'clock, I'll take that flight even though I might get one for half the price at one o'clock. And I'll have a limo at the other end waiting for me. I travel trouble free and first class.

PLAYBOY: Where do you shop for clothes?

CHILD: Lands' End mail order. You can get a suit there for a couple hundred bucks. And that's what I wear. I'm not saying I look good, but I guarantee I would not look any better if I went to Armani.

PLAYBOY: Do you throw your clothes away after they get dirty?

CHILD: I take them to the laundry. I don't live like Reacher. We just got our country house in East Sussex in England and are having it fixed up. It's in the arts and crafts style, built in the 1920s. We bought a beautiful Renoir painted in 1912. I have a supercharged Jaguar. I have my guitar collection. I actually could afford an even grander life. I err on the side of having less rather than more.

PLAYBOY: How do you relax?

CHILD: In this I am a lot like Reacher. He enjoys his solitude, and I do too. I don't have that group of male friends that seems to be the American ideal; I don't have five or six buddies I go to a bar with. I finish work at six P.M. Then I watch baseball on TV. I'm a Yankees fan. If the game finishes at 10, I'll walk down to the Village to hear what's playing in the clubs.

PLAYBOY: If you were in distress, do you have a male friend you'd call?

CHILD: Actually, no. Apart from my wife, who by default is my close friend, I'm a fairly isolated person, and I feel fine about it. If I have an emotional wound, I instantly say, "Fuck that," and it's gone. It's probably not a healthy way to deal with things, but I have these imagined ideals against which I measure myself. The heroes for boys of my generation were the RAF bombing crews who faced life with a stiff upper lip. That was very English, and it completely disappeared in the 1990s. When Princess Diana was killed, there was a sea change in Britain. There was this outpouring of cheap emotion that has never stopped. My center of gravity is tied to an earlier time when the masculine thing was to just take it.

PLAYBOY: That sounds like your father. Other than your occasional high-end purchase, have you made no concessions to our fallen time?

CHILD: If I'm feeling stressed, I'll smoke some weed at night.

PLAYBOY: How often do you smoke?

CHILD: Maybe five nights out of seven. It depends on what I'm doing. I'm a contemplative person, and weed helps me cut through the membranes of daily cares. It simplifies things and allows me to identify the important strands. If I'm struggling on a book, I'll light a pipe and the answer will sometimes come to me.

PLAYBOY: You must be the world's most productive pothead.

CHILD: There are others.

PLAYBOY: With the September publication of *A Wanted Man,* you're on track to write 20 books in two decades. That's a lot of work. How many more will you do?

CHILD: Initially I was planning on 21. I wanted to match but, as a matter of respect, not exceed John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee novels. He did 21. That's one of the best series we have. I mean, I think Cal Ripken should not have exceeded Lou Gehrig's consecutive game streak. Gehrig's streak terminated because he had a mortal illness. John MacDonald stopped writing because he died. For all we know, he could've written many more. So I feel I should do 21 Reacher novels and stop.

PLAYBOY: You're almost there.

CHILD: Exactly. But in a human sense this will be incredibly difficult to do because you get seduced by the attention. And you've got to have nerves of steel to turn down the money. I do four-book contracts. To walk away from the next one would probably cost me $30 million or $40 million globally. So I'm not sure, but I think I'll be done sooner than later.

PLAYBOY: Do you know how the series will conclude?

CHILD: I have the title: *Die Lonely.* I believe Reacher is a noble old warhorse and deserves a spectacular end. I don't think I should just let him peter out. I have it in my mind to maneuver him into some situation where he must decide either to give up the person he's protecting or to give up himself. He'll face a villain he can't beat, and he'll choose to sacrifice himself. He will drag himself back to a filthy motel bathroom and bleed to death on the floor.

PLAYBOY: Maybe Reacher will live on in the movies.

CHILD: I have a cameo in *Jack Reacher* in which I essentially hand Hollywood the baton. In the scene, Reacher has been arrested and is in jail overnight. He's sprung the next morning by his lawyer. He stops at the front desk of the police station to retrieve his possessions, and a sergeant returns his toothbrush. I play the sergeant.

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SONNY VACCARO

(continued from page 68)

corruption and abuses. Now he wants to drain it. Technically, Vaccaro's lawsuit concerns compensation for former athletes who were forced to sign away their rights in return for their scholarships and whose images the NCAA then sold to ESPN, Electronic Arts and the Collegiate Licensing Company—the latter two of which are defendants in the suit along with the NCAA. The grounds of the suit are that the NCAA, by imposing a single scholarship rule for all its member schools, effectively created a cartel that violates federal antitrust law since athletes have no recourse. It is sign or else. As Walter Byers, a former executive director of the NCAA who later called for reform, puts it in his book, "A meeting among business competitors to harmonize their bids in a contract is usually called a conspiracy. More than 900 members agreeing by contract through the NCAA to issue common contracts to young people recruited to play on various sports teams seems to fit that niche." That's exactly Vaccaro's point.

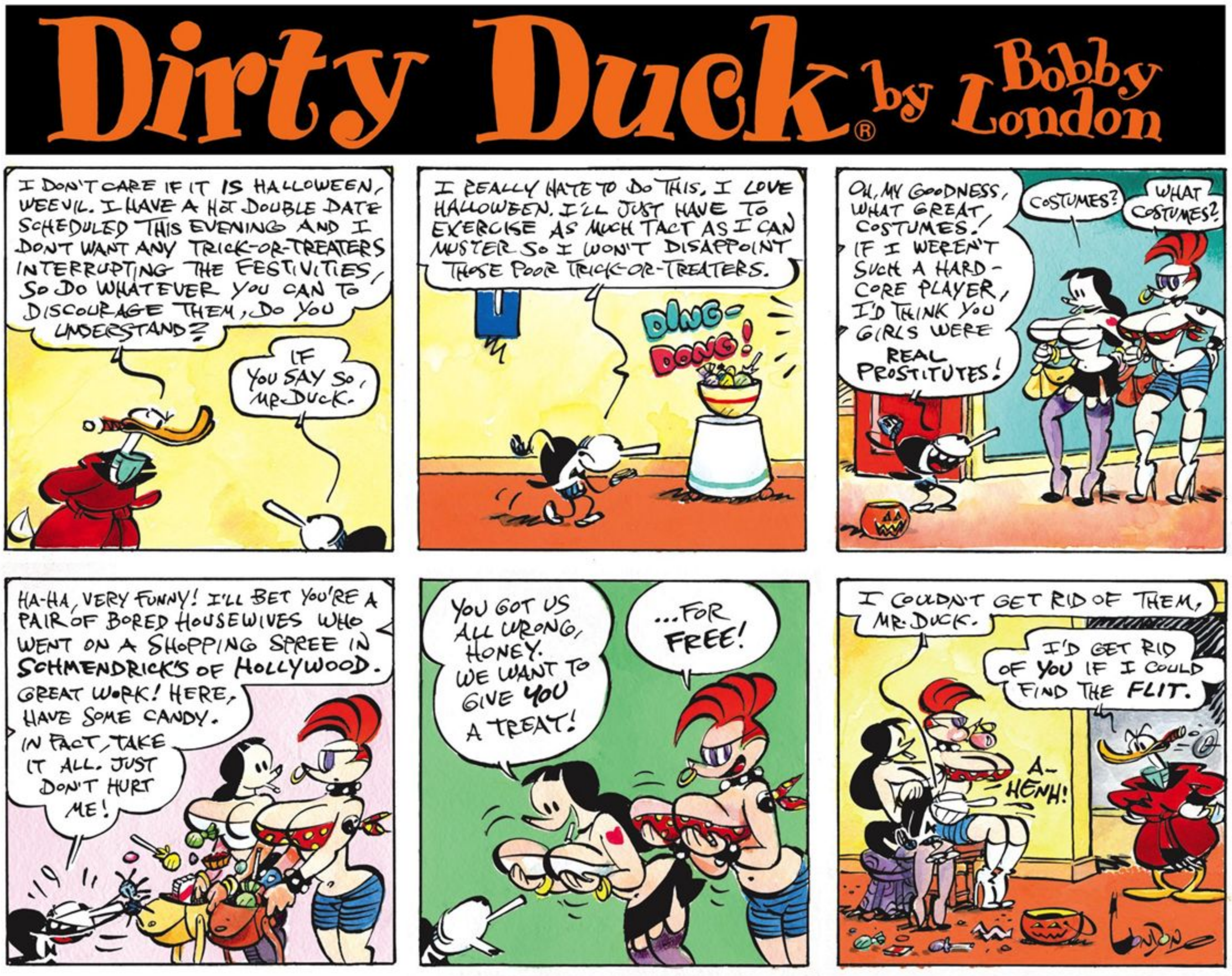
Should Vaccaro win, former athletes will probably be compensated. But the ramifications of the suit go far beyond those athletes. If Vaccaro succeeds in voiding the NCAA's monopoly on the images of former athletes, it will go a long way toward voiding the restrictions the NCAA forces on its current athletes—everything from preventing schools from crafting their own scholarship rules, which has kept athletes from shopping for the best package, to preventing athletes from signing individual deals with shoe companies. Without those restrictions, the NCAA, which doesn't have too many other functions beyond imposing rules, may well go out of business. At least that's what Vaccaro hopes.

More than that, he wants to be the one to plant the dagger. Vaccaro knows that the NCAA usually manages to wriggle free from legal action because the courts seem to buy what has been called "the magic of amateurism." Athletes, the NCAA says, get a free education, though Vaccaro and others find this argument disingenuous. Professionally bound athletes, he says, aren't in school for an education, and the education they get is a "joke," with majors tailored to make it easy for them. "One school has a housing major for athletes," he howled during the Berkeley lecture. "A real estate agent has more education than a housing major." Indeed, despite the NCAA's professed efforts to enforce higher educational standards, 14 teams in the NCAA men's basketball tournament in 2012 failed to graduate 50 percent of their athletes.

Still, the amateurism-education tactic has proven so successful that it has seemed futile to challenge the NCAA's authority, and few people have even dared—until now. But as Vaccaro told that Berkeley class, "The first one over the wall always gets shot." Vaccaro is spoiling to be the first one over that wall, even if he gets shot.

•

If college athletics had a Faust, it would be Sonny Vaccaro, which obviously makes him an improbable savior. He was the guy who was always dangling money in front of college coaches and then college administrators, and they just couldn't help themselves. As he once confessed to Robert Lipsyte of *The New York Times,* "What I'm doing is morally wrong." There are those who even accuse him of almost single-handedly destroying college basketball by dangling sneaker money in front of young athletes, encouraging them to emphasize individual skills at the expense of the team, the better to advertise themselves. The NCAA always seems to have regarded him as a kind of gangster—first pressuring him to rat out his friend Jerry Tarkanian, the University of Nevada at Las Vegas coach who was constantly under investigation by the NCAA for various infractions (Vaccaro says he never knew anything about Tarkanian's alleged wrongdoing), and then investigating Vaccaro himself for having given gifts to several players (he was completely absolved). The



NCAA refuses to speculate about his motives now, but it has quietly impugned him as a way of impugning the case. Attorney Jon King says, "He doesn't seem like someone who fits into their sort of executive club."

He never has. Indeed, nefariousness always seemed to cling to Vaccaro. It's probably in part because he's Italian and looks a bit like a low-level mobster from *The Sopranos:* dark complexion, raccoon eyes, a broad forehead and, in his younger days, a shape that prompted former USC coach George Raveling to nickname him Pear. His basic wardrobe once consisted of a sweat suit. (At his wedding to his second wife, Pam, he jokingly had the band play *The Godfather* theme for their first dance.) In part, it is because he spent a good deal of time in Las Vegas, where his younger brother Jimmy still runs the book at an operation called Lucky's, and because he cultivates a Runyonesque persona in a world of other Runyonesque characters with such odd nicknames as Tootie, Dushie and Hambone. And in part it's because the idea of handing checks to coaches seems vaguely sinister, though there is nothing criminal or immoral about it despite Vaccaro's own professions of remorse.

At first blush, it's hard to say exactly what Vaccaro stands to gain in taking on college athletics, except to shake that gangster image. He is an unpaid consultant to the case, and if he wins, there is no payday for him, only for the former athletes whose cause he is championing. You can press him all you want to try to uncover some ulterior motive, but you'll always get the same answer: He's doing it for the kids. His voice rising when he talks about them, Vaccaro seems genuinely angry about the treatment of marginalized young athletes.

There is nonetheless a personal element to this fight—one that is buried deep in Vaccaro's own history.

Nicknamed Sonny by his mother for his sunny disposition, John Paul Vaccaro grew up cheek by jowl with Serbs, Croats, Poles and fellow Italians in the small town of Trafford in western Pennsylvania, 17 miles from Pittsburgh, where everyone was an outsider. It was hardscrabble coal and steel country. His father was an immigrant who poured molten steel at the nearby Duquesne mill, missing just a single day of work in 43 years. His mother was the daughter of Italian immigrants, and two of her brothers schooled Sonny in baseball and football, both of which he so excelled at that the Pittsburgh Pirates offered him a $3,500 signing bonus to play baseball and the University of Kentucky offered him a scholarship to play football as a five-foot-10, 170-pound running back. He chose the latter, he said, because Kentucky's quarterback was a fellow Italian, Vito "Babe" Parilli.

That, though, is ancient history. Most people pick up the Vaccaro story 20 years later, in the 1970s, when Vaccaro was in his 30s and quit his job teaching and coaching at Trafford High, left his wife and four children and became a vagabond. He calls these years his "lost weekend," after the Billy Wilder movie, though it was more like a lost half decade. He spent summers in Las Vegas, gambling and living off comps. The rest of the time he lived out of his car or on a friend's couch. He was aimless.

What ended his lost half decade was a fortuitous relationship with two sports agents, Lew Schaffel and Jerry Davis. The two asked Vaccaro to use his connections from a high school all-star basketball game he ran in Pittsburgh called the Dapper Dan to help the agency sign former participants now out of college and headed to the NBA. At the time, Davis represented a middling guard named Phil Chenier who had a $2,000-a-year sneaker contract with a small company headquartered in Beaverton, Oregon named Nike, which was so little known that most people pronounced it "Nicky." Vaccaro had never had anything to do with shoes, but while running a summer basketball camp at a dormant ski resort in Seven Springs, Pennsylvania that year, he noticed how the kids blew out their flimsy canvas sneakers. On impulse he decided to design new leather basketball shoes—some with holes for ventilation, some with Velcro fasteners, one that was backless like a sandal—and had a shoemaker friend manufacture prototypes. Davis wrote Sonny a letter of introduction to the head of Nike, a man named Phil Knight.

As Vaccaro remembers it, he brought the shoes slung over his shoulder in a burlap bag to a series of wallboard cubicles that constituted the unimposing Nike offices in Beaverton, thinking this might be his golden ticket. The Nike execs examined the shoes absently, took him to dinner at a Chinese restaurant (Vaccaro thinks it was because he was a curiosity—"an Italian guy from Pittsburgh") and then sent him on his way. They never talked about shoes again. But about two weeks later Nike's marketing director, a man named Rob Strasser, asked Vaccaro to fly out again to pick his brain about how Nike might make a beachhead into basketball. Vaccaro was hoping he might get Nike at least to contribute shoes to the Dapper Dan, but he also casually mentioned to Strasser that if Nike wanted to get kids to wear its basketball shoes, it shouldn't just sign up garden-variety NBA players like Phil Chenier. Nike ought to give shoes to Fort Hamilton High School in New York, where a phenom named Albert King played, and to teams at other inner-city high schools. Kids wanted to wear the shoes of the coolest athletes, and these high-schoolers were the coolest. As Strasser mulled the idea, he decided to attend the Dapper Dan, and he was impressed by what he saw. When he got back to Beaverton, he told Vaccaro the high schools would get their sneakers. As Vaccaro puts it, "That's the birth of the shoe industry as we know it."

Thus began Sonny Vaccaro's Nike period, which is when the sneaker money began to flow. By the time he made his third trip to Beaverton, he was armed with another idea. Vaccaro suggested that Nike give away shoes to major college basketball programs and then pay the coaches for the privilege of having their teams wear them. He knew the coaches would bite because they didn't make all that much money; the legendary UCLA coach John Wooden reportedly never made more than $35,000 in base salary and even then only after winning nine NCAA championships. The first coach Vaccaro approached was his old friend Jerry Tarkanian of UNLV, who got $10,000 and 120 pairs of shoes.

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Tarkanian couldn't believe his good fortune. Within a year, Vaccaro had between 60 and 70 coaches under contract.

Even before Vaccaro, college sports were never as pristine as their advocates would like fans to believe. Decades ago athletes were frequently paid under the table and occasionally over it. Still, when Vaccaro began doling out Nike money, he changed the complexion of amateur athletics by opening the door to outside commercialization and demonstrating just how much could be made on the backs of college athletes. Eventually he would pay coaches in the "serious six figures" to have their teams wear Nike, and when the competition got hot in the early 1980s, the top coaches even got Nike stock, which, if they held it, would be worth millions of dollars today. That led to all sorts of deals between college coaches and high school coaches who had players the former coveted. Vaccaro described to the Knight Commission how college coaches could effectively launder sneaker money by having the companies underwrite coach-sponsored tournaments or camps—money that could then be diverted to the high school coaches or even high school players without being traced. Vaccaro was the first man to see this as the future of college athletics—the first man to see that for all the protestations from the NCAA and universities, it was about one thing and one thing only: money.

But even as he was playing Faust and sewing up college basketball for Nike by tempting coaches, the company wasn't entirely sure he wasn't a mobster. He had no contract and was making only $500 a month, without any commissions. It was probably the best money Nike ever spent. In 1985, thanks to Vaccaro, all four NCAA finalists wore Nikes. As he put it, "Being a Nike school was almost tantamount to being a school at all."

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It's the summer of the NBA lockout, 2011, and half a dozen or so NBA stars, including Russell Westbrook, Al Horford and Tyreke Evans, are working out in the St. Monica Catholic High School gymnasium on a quiet side street in Santa Monica where Vaccaro once lived, operating his basketball empire from a table in Izzy's Deli. When Vaccaro saunters into the gym, he is greeted with broad smiles and bear hugs, like a favorite uncle. Just about everybody outside college basketball's ruling powers loves Sonny Vaccaro. The night before, he and his wife, Pam, were having dinner with Arn Tellem, one of the NBA's most powerful player agents and one of Sonny's closest friends. The next day he is having lunch with an NBA general manager who reminisces about how he and Vaccaro circumvented the NBA's player combine assessing potential draftees by setting up their own workouts for the players they favored. Even though he is out of basketball, Vaccaro routinely gets calls from current, former and prospective players seeking his counsel about agents, sneaker deals and life. He even gets calls from ninth- and 10th-grade prospects. On draft night in 2011, five general managers phoned him for his intelligence on draftees—in the old days, he says, 25 would have called him—and so did several of the draftees themselves, including the number one choice, Kyrie Irving, whom Vaccaro had never even met.

That is unusual, because just about everybody in basketball has a history with Vaccaro. The biggest NBA stars all played in his Dapper Dan games or, after 1991, their successor, the Roundball Classic, where Vaccaro made a point of meeting each invitee. And more attended the ABCD summer basketball camp Vaccaro inaugurated with Nike money in 1984 at Princeton, where he personally selected the best 120 (later 200) high school players in the country for one week of instruction and games. Vaccaro counseled every single player at the camp one-on-one, which is why they all know him and why he knows all of them. Vaccaro's memory is encyclopedic. He not only remembers every player who ever attended ABCD, he also remembers every single *play* in every game. He says he never missed one.

Vaccaro's admirers say that because of the Dapper Dan and ABCD, Nike actually benefited more from Vaccaro's basketball instincts than he benefited from Nike's deep pockets. There was always another sneaker company waiting to employ Vaccaro, but there wasn't another Vaccaro. Though he never played basketball and had coached it only at the lowest amateur ranks, he had an uncanny eye for talent, which is what led to probably his greatest triumph at Nike. As Vaccaro tells it, some time after North Carolina's NCAA tournament win in 1982, Rob Strasser, Nike's marketing guru, invited him to a high-level two-day meeting at a private mansion outside Beaverton. The subject: how to expand Nike's brand to professional basketball. Nike had earmarked $500,000 to be divided among selected NBA stars to endorse Nike shoes. The question, of course, was which stars they should select. When Vaccaro was asked to weigh in, he unhesitatingly told them to give the entire pot to North Carolina junior Michael Jordan, who had declared he was leaving to go pro. Jordan was one of the few college stars who hadn't played in the Dapper Dan or at ABCD. His college stats were hardly stratospheric, and North Carolina was a Converse school to boot, but Vaccaro said he had a gut feeling Jordan would be the gold standard. Asked by one attendee if he was willing to bet his job on it, Vaccaro said he was.

Vacarro looked Jordan in the eye and said, "You're going to have your own shoe. Your name is going to be on every shoe the kids wear." Air Jordan was born.

Now he had to convince Jordan to sign with Nike. The two met at a rib joint in Santa Monica. Jordan said he was partial to Adidas because he thought they had more style. Vaccaro looked him in the eye and said, "You're going to have your own shoe. Your name is going to be on every shoe the kids wear." Jordan laughed, Air Jordan was born, and Nike soared. So too did the aspirations of just about every college player. In time they all thought they might get a Jordan deal, which raised the stakes of college basketball even higher—again, thanks to Vaccaro.

But there was one more milestone in the Vaccaro-Nike saga—one that would, more than anything else, lead to Vaccaro's ultimate realization about the hypocrisy of amateurism and his role in it. It was a call in the late 1980s from Sam Jankovich, the athletic director of the University of Miami, with a proposition: Rather than pay the coaches, Nike should pay the university itself for an "all school" deal in which *every* Miami team would wear Nike. Vaccaro claims it was a bracing moment. For all the abuse that has been heaped on him from some quarters—and that he sometimes heaps on himself—for having despoiled the purity of college athletics, he says, "I know in my heart that never ever should I or Nike or any shoe company be held responsible for any business that was done between corporate America and amateur basketball or football and universities. They initiated it." As soon as Miami signed, other schools lined up for the same deal. As Vaccaro told Strasser, "We've got it made now."

But as it turned out, when it came to corporate America, Vaccaro wasn't much luckier than the amateur athletes he had befriended and defended. In August 1991, a few years after the Miami deal, he got an urgent call that he was needed at an emergency meeting in Beaverton. No sooner did he walk into Phil Knight's office than Knight said, "I've got to let you go." Vaccaro, shell-shocked, quit instead. The entire conversation took less than 10 minutes. A week later Knight offered him $250,000 for the rights to the Dapper Dan and ABCD, which Vaccaro owned, but he refused to sell. Vaccaro still has no idea why he was fired. Even today, a Nike spokesperson refuses to comment on Vaccaro.

Word of the firing traveled fast. The next day, he got a call from Converse offering to finance ABCD, and the day after that he was contacted by Strasser, who had recently left Nike to take over Adidas, with the promise that as soon as things were up and running there, he would bring Vaccaro aboard. Jordan called to ask if there was anything he could do. Six of his Nike coaches pitched in to buy him an engraved gold Rolex watch. But perhaps the greatest tribute would come later, from an economist who told Vaccaro he had created more wealth than any other person who was not the head of a company. "It starts in 1977," Vaccaro says ruefully of his relationship with Nike. "They own nothing. I leave in 1991; they owned everything."

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And so began act two of Sonny Vaccaro's basketball odyssey. He spent his first post-Nike summer with Converse. Then, within six months, Strasser made good on his promise with Adidas. Financially it was a boon since Strasser gave him Adidas stock as well as a salary.

But even more important than the money was the revenge for his dismissal. Vaccaro

knew he couldn't pry away Nike's colleges without having players at ABCD whom those colleges wanted. Since Nike also had, thanks to Vaccaro, most of the best inner-city high schools under contract, Vaccaro had to go to the one place to which he and Nike hadn't paid attention: nonscholastic amateur teams. He began scouting Amateur Athletic Union teams and forming relationships with the top AAU coaches and their players to insure they would go to ABCD rather than the rival Nike camp. They did. "You keep score," Vaccaro says, comparing his ABCD camp with Nike's new post-Vaccaro camp. "When it was all over, I had this guy, this guy and this guy, and they had that guy. We won. That's it." Kevin Love and Derrick Rose, two high school stars who played at Nike schools, even attended ABCD. As one NBA general manager put it, "Sonny was the brand. Nike wasn't the brand. Adidas wasn't the brand."

And Vaccaro was the brand not just because of the prestige of attending ABCD, which was itself a tribute to him. It was because Vaccaro made a point of personalizing everything. When he bought a mansion in Calabasas in southern California, the players always had a place to stay. He and Pam didn't swim, but he had a pool dug for his basketball visitors, most of them inner-city kids who had never been in a pool before. When players needed someone to talk to, they talked to Sonny or Pam. When they needed advice, they got it from Vaccaro. When they needed money—and many who never made it to the pros did—they asked Vaccaro for it. Vaccaro has hundreds of letters from players—he keeps everything—and he's written hundreds more. Although he has been demonized, not a single player has ever said a disparaging word against him. That was his advantage against Nike.

And he used that advantage at Adidas when he upped the ante even more by taking on Nike in the pro ranks. He set his sights on a high school star from Lower Merion, Pennsylvania he hoped would be the face of Adidas's NBA line. Again, Vaccaro was playing a hunch. As the son of former NBA player Joe Bryant, who had played in the Dapper Dan, Kobe Bryant was hardly a secret, but no one could really say how good he was or even if he was going to skip college and go pro—nobody but Vaccaro. Knowing Kobe from the Dapper Dan and ABCD, Vaccaro was fairly certain he wasn't going to college. Still, Vaccaro moved to New York with Pam and spent a year courting Kobe's parents, who would drive up from Philadelphia for Sunday brunches. Vaccaro was with Bryant on draft night—he went 13th—and then quickly signed him to an Adidas contract.

The end with Adidas came when Vaccaro was courting another high school star and ABCD legend, LeBron James. Vaccaro thought James was the best player of that age he had ever seen. So he romanced LeBron's mother, Gloria, and her boyfriend, Eddie Jackson. He outfitted LeBron's high school team with sneakers. He flew LeBron and his teammates to Los Angeles on a private jet, got them Lakers playoff tickets and feted them at a posh mansion in Malibu—at a cost in the mid-six figures for the weekend. And then he promised LeBron a $100 million, 10-year contract—a figure, he said, he had cleared with Adidas. But when the festivities ended and Adidas's attorneys tendered the contract, it was for significantly less. Vaccaro quit Adidas that night, and James eventually signed with Nike, with Vaccaro advising him to use the original Adidas offer as leverage.

He wasn't unemployed long. Reebok hired him almost immediately, sponsoring his events and paying him handsomely. But by this time he was feeling a vague sense of malaise. For years, with no particular purpose in mind, he had been collecting clippings about the NCAA and the way it shortchanged athletes—clippings that would eventually fill 20 boxes—though he says now that he first recognized the extent of the injustice of using young athletes to generate millions of dollars without giving them a single penny when ESPN bought the Classic Sports Network, which included the rights to old college basketball and football broadcasts, for $175 million. Vaccaro says his realization was further sharpened in 1997 when he was asked to appear on a panel on amateurism hosted by Ted Koppel, and Michigan basketball star Chris Webber said that his parents had had to *buy* a Michigan Chris Webber jersey. The final straw, he says, was the so-called "one and done" rule, instituted in 2006 in a collaboration between the NCAA and the NBA, which compelled high school graduates either to sit out a year or to play in college for a year before being eligible for the NBA draft. If they were injured during that year, they essentially forfeited their professional future.

Vaccaro appreciated the risk. He remembered a player at La Salle University named Kenny Durrett who had decided to turn pro in Italy, only to have his coach convince him to return to school. Durrett was injured, and though he was later drafted by and played in the NBA, the injury probably cost him millions of dollars. Similarly, Vaccaro has letters from other players—one who complained about leaving college without being able to read or write, another from a former collegiate star who stayed for his senior season, wound up spending most of it on the bench injured and went undrafted. Now he was adrift and asking Vaccaro for advice.

Though it is undeniable that their universities exploited these young men, there are those who question whether Vaccaro himself exploited young basketball players—a charge he vehemently denies. He says he took a commission from a player only twice, both times from professionals. "Never in my life did a kid give me anything or was there ever a due bill for anything," he insists. Neither, he says, did he ever steer a player to a particular college or a particular agent to get a kickback. To do so would have destroyed his relationships with other coaches and agents—relationships he needed. He claims he never hyped middle-schoolers either and actually dissuaded young stars from competing against one another at camps the way older players did because he thought it put too much pressure on them. The only charges to which he pleads guilty are buying airplane tickets for St. John's stars Felipe López and Zendon Hamilton so they could attend a basketball camp, buying clothes for Rhode Island star Lamar Odom because he didn't have any money of his own and putting up at his own house an African prospect named Makhtar N'Diaye—offenses the NCAA had investigated and cleared him of.

Nevertheless, by throwing money at high school, AAU and college coaches, Vaccaro knew they might wind up abusing the

"I'm a blow-up doll!"

system. Hence his confessions of immorality. Like "Manchurian candidates," he says, middle-schoolers would go to high schools and AAU programs that had agreements with particular sneaker companies, which would in turn steer them to colleges affiliated with the same company—"So we can tie up the minds and souls of the people," was how he put it. He certainly knew that the athletes weren't getting any of that sneaker money while they were in school and that most of them would never make the pros, where they could finally cash in. The athletes' interests were always secondary to those of the sneaker company or the school. When Vaccaro pleaded powerless to stop the process to the *Times*' Robert Lipsyte back in 1997, Lipsyte told him, "You sound like an arms dealer who says there should be world peace but still sells nuclear warheads."

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And yet Vaccaro finally did stop selling sneakers. In 2007 he quit his job at Reebok with two years remaining on his contract and decided to fight the NCAA and the universities. Thus began act three of his life. And though he attributes his declaration of war to his ripening sense of injustice, it may have had less to do with epiphanies and guilt than with a culmination of umbrage that had slowly been mounting since the time he got that football scholarship to Kentucky and the university recommended he attend a junior college to raise his grades. That was when Vaccaro discovered just how disposable college athletes are. He discovered it because he was one of them. In junior college, he hurt his back playing football, lost his quickness as well as his Kentucky offer and enrolled at Youngstown State in Ohio, where the coach thought he would be productive at even half his old speed. He wasn't. Luckily, Youngstown State's assistant football coach and head basketball coach, a fellow Italian American named Dom Rosselli, recognized in Vaccaro's extroversion, enthusiasm and ethnicity things that might connect with kids Rosselli wanted to recruit—black kids. Vaccaro kept his scholarship and was able to graduate by trying to lure these kids to play for Rosselli.

Vaccaro says now that it was less about basketball than about race. All the kids he recruited for Youngstown were black. Just about all the kids who played in the Dapper Dan, the best players in America, were black. And Vaccaro says that he, as an Italian American who was slighted by WASP America, empathized with these kids—empathized especially with the handful who were recruited by white colleges and wound up without any sense of belonging or much of an education. The Dapper Dan was his civil rights movement—his way to get attention and, even more, respect for young black athletes. Before the Dapper Dan, nobody knew who these players were. After it, every basketball aficionado did. Three hundred college coaches attended that first game in 1965.

Today Vaccaro calls the NCAA "the most racist organization in America" for the way it uses and discards black athletes, which helps explain his determination to destroy it. In doing so, he would be avenging himself and every black college basketball player the system abused. But in order to do so, he had to leave Reebok so no one could accuse him of profiting while he was waging his battle.

He decided to beat the NCAA at its own game. He advised a coveted California high school point guard named Brandon Jennings, whom he knew from ABCD, to skip college and play in Europe instead, thus taking on one-and-done. Vaccaro negotiated a contract with Lottomatica in Rome for Jennings and got him a $2 million sneaker deal with Under Armour, including stock. The next year Jennings was drafted 10th by the Milwaukee Bucks and is now an NBA star.

Still, Vaccaro realized that a player here and there decamping to Europe wasn't going to bring down the NCAA. He had to build a movement. So he began soliciting invitations to speak on college campuses—not to athletes but to law, journalism and business students he hoped he could inspire to lead the charge against the NCAA. It wasn't as much of a stretch as it might seem. His Runyonesque persona to the contrary, Vaccaro, in private, is actually professorial: articulate, highly intelligent and extremely well-read. He brought his message to Harvard, Yale, Columbia, even to the heart of basketball country at Duke, North Carolina and Memphis. "I didn't want to be Joan of Arc," he says. "I thought I could be the person who said, 'I wish to hell Joan of Arc would come along.'"

Vaccaro calls the NCAA "the most racist organization in America" for the way it uses and discards black athletes, which helps explain his determination to destroy it.

It was after one of these appearances, at Howard University, that he got a call from Michael Hausfeld, a prominent Washington, D.C. attorney who had won reparations from Germany for slave laborers during World War II and restitution from Swiss banks for Holocaust victims whose assets the banks had wrongly retained. Hausfeld thought he saw a similar situation in the athletes of the NCAA. Hausfeld grilled Vaccaro in his office about the sins of the NCAA, then got up from the conference table, hugged Vaccaro and said, "We're going to take them on." Hausfeld's attorneys hauled off Vaccaro's boxes of papers and began carefully sifting for evidence of NCAA perfidy. As Hausfeld attorney Jon King readily admits, Vaccaro was the "jump start to the entire process. He's the heart and soul of the case."

Since Vaccaro suffered no personal harm from the NCAA's contract and has no legal standing as a plaintiff, he had to recruit someone who did have standing. (The NCAA, still thinking he was John Dillinger, as Vaccaro says, has asked for the past 12 years of his records, on the theory that he induced players to join the suit by paying them.) He phoned two dozen former players. Some didn't want to upset their alma maters. Others were hoping for coaching jobs and couldn't take the risk. When Vaccaro reached him, former UCLA star and college player of the year Ed O'Bannon was working for a car dealership in Las Vegas and had already seen his image on an EA Sports game, for which he had received no compensation. He pondered the decision for a week before telling Vaccaro, "I want to be the man."

Along with O'Bannon, there are now 20 plaintiffs, among them Hall of Famers Oscar Robertson and Bill Russell. Vaccaro says a hundred more are waiting to join the suit who will testify in court, including, Vaccaro promises, the biggest names in basketball. Also joining the suit are plaintiffs from the other college money sport, football, including former Arizona State and Nebraska quarterback Sam Keller, who had brought a suit of his own against the NCAA for the use of his likeness. (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar has filed another action in California state court but has yet to join the Hausfeld suit.) The coaches, many of them Vaccaro's friends, have been less forthcoming, and Vaccaro isn't happy about it. "Not one college coach has stood up on a platform and said, 'I want to do what's right for these kids.' Why does it have to be me?"

That is a good question. The main answer may be that the NCAA is powerful, and it takes someone gutsy like Vaccaro to challenge it—someone who knows the abuses firsthand. But if he has taken on this burden for revenge, he has also taken it on for redemption. So the answer, in part, is that Vaccaro, a former altar boy who refuses to eat meat on Fridays, is a practicing Catholic paying penance for an exploitation he helped finance even if he didn't, as he claims, actively participate. And the answer is that Vaccaro, a man who says the worst thing on his record is a speeding ticket but who is nevertheless still regarded as some sort of mobster, will always be an outsider among outsiders, and he takes that role seriously. And the answer is that Vaccaro cares about his legacy. When James Gandolfini bought the rights to Vaccaro's life story for an HBO movie, Vaccaro refused to approve the script because, to hype the drama, it showed him doing underhanded things he'd never done. "I turned down a pretty good paycheck," Vaccaro says.

And finally the answer is Pam, Vaccaro's beautiful blonde wife of 28 years—19 years his junior—a former actress and model from whom he hasn't been separated for more than 24 hours at a time since their marriage. It was Pam who got her husband three large framed photos for his birthday several years ago because she wanted to remind him of the "true Sonny"—photos that, he says, are "always to my back" and that now hang in his office. They are of Roberto Clemente, Muhammad Ali and Jesse Owens—his three heroes. "They all have one thing in common," Vaccaro says, tearing up. "They all did something that did not benefit them." Vaccaro is hoping his lawsuit may have the same effect on his reputation. He doesn't want to be known as the man who commercialized amateur athletics. He wants to be known as the man who wound up changing the system that abused young athletes.

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GOLD RUSH

(continued from page 106)

dealer on *The Wire,* the classic HBO drama. The name of the dealer, along with a memorable quote, appears near each door. There's Marlo ("I wasn't made to play the son") and Prop Joe ("The shit is just business. Buy for a dollar, sell for two").

Though Dan Porter, a clean-cut 46-year-old in jeans and a polo shirt, looks more like Greg Focker than Avon Barksdale, he sells video games like the guys sell crack on *The Wire*. "That's where I learned everything in business," he says. Like what? The $210 million man smiles and quotes the line outside the Omar conference room: "It's all in the game, yo."

Porter never expected to be in the game at all. Growing up in Philadelphia, he wasn't a computer geek and couldn't code a lick. His video game experience was limited to playing *Defender* at the local bowling alley. But what he lacked in programming skills he made up for in entrepreneurial hustle. After college, Porter helped launch Teach for America, a national teacher corps, and led TicketWeb, a ticket-sales site that he helped sell to Ticketmaster for more than $35 million.

Porter was working for Richard Branson, owner of Virgin, on a series of music festivals when he met Charles Forman, a programmer who'd been running a fledgling dating site with the clunky name I'm in Like With You. Porter, intrigued by the success of online games, came onboard in 2008 as CEO to transform Forman's outfit into a game company, which they redubbed OMGPOP because it sounded contemporary and cool. "I wanted to call it WTFMOM, but it turned out that was a porn site," Porter says.

OMGPOP scored $17 million in funding, but the company's games—including *Puppy World* and *Hamster Battle*—never got out of the doghouse. Forman left the company, leaving Porter in charge. Porter had heard the stories about start-ups like Rovio and Zynga making millions on mobile and social games. If they could do it, why not him? "I was like, I want to make a game," he recalls. "I'm not a game designer, but I played all these games on an iPhone. I kind of understood what makes games work: the rhythm, the pacing, the sense of fun, the way they mess with your mind."

Mess with your mind, indeed. The best cell phone games give you something to fill your micro-slices of downtime—riding the subway, waiting in a checkout line. You don't have to read pages of instructions to play; you can jump in and know intuitively what to do. Swipe your finger here, tap the screen there. Unlike *Grand Theft Auto* or *Mass Effect,* a great mobile game is designed to be played in brief intervals, delivering a little dopamine hit that sates you until you can play again. "You always feel like you want to take one more crack at solving the problem," Porter says.

In this sense, cell phone games like *Angry Birds* and *Doodle Jump* hark back to the first golden age of arcades, when playing, say, *Space Invaders* was as simple as moving your ship and shooting. You don't need to memorize a million combo moves on your Xbox controller. The secret is to divine the old adage about what makes a game compelling, whether it's chess or *Cut the Rope:* It needs to be easy to learn but difficult to master.

Few have mastered the formula better, or seen a bigger payoff, than Jason Kapalka, co-founder of the Seattle-based developer PopCap. The company's pioneering puzzle game, *Bejeweled,* defined fingertip candy for a new generation. The object is to line up a series of brightly colored gems that vanish with a satisfying sparkle, only to be replaced by more.

PopCap presaged the mobile boom by targeting casual gamers—moms and bored secretaries—on the web. But the company was still struggling. "We knew an audience was big but was very hard to reach," Kapalka says. Then smartphones came along. "Now nongamers have devices that can easily access games," Kapalka says. "That caused this enormous explosion." *Bejeweled* went on to sell more than 50 million copies, and in July 2011 PopCap sold to video game publishing giant Electronic Arts for $750 million. (Though PopCap sold for more than OMGPOP, its rise was not nearly as immediate.)

As Porter knew, PopCap wasn't the only company striking it rich in the new golden age of gaming. Last summer Keith Shepherd and Natalia Luckyanova, a young husband-and-wife team in Raleigh, North Carolina, became overnight sensations with their hit mobile game *Temple Run.* Inspired by the opening scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark,* the action game casts you as an adventurer running away from freaky beasts after stealing a temple idol.

Released in August 2011, *Temple Run* has been downloaded more than 100 million times, and it made its creators instant millionaires. "There have been a lot of people banging down the door and wanting to talk to us," Luckyanova says, "companies wanting to acquire us, venture companies wanting to invest, which is great but a little crazy." Shepherd still can't grasp his unusual success. "To see people playing the game in public, on the metro or at a bar, is a little mind-blowing," he says. As for the money, Shepherd plans to treat himself soon. "I got my eyes on some fancy rides," he says.

With games like *Temple Run* and *Bejeweled* paying off for their creators, Porter wanted his shot at fame and fortune. "I wanted to make a game that was played by everyone," he says. And crazily enough, he did.

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Late last year Porter was visiting a friend who worked at a hip-hop record label. He had come to show off progress on his new game, which he'd been working on since June. The game was *Draw Something,* a new version of a title the company had released on the web with moderate success a couple of years earlier. His friends were skeptical. "They were like, 'Yeah, yeah,'" he says. "They described it as my Ahab moment."

The original title, *Draw My Thing,* was a bit like an online game show: Players took turns drawing pictures that others online had to be the first to guess. Porter thought that bringing that kind of Pictionary-like social experience to mobile games would be unique and addictive. As with all game development, this one evolved by trial and error. Initially, to play the game you had to draw something based on a choice of three different words, then the other person had to type out a best guess. But as Porter watched his buddy try to guess the picture he had drawn, something wasn't clicking.

"It's a bong!" the guy said. "A joint! Weed!"

Actually, it was supposed to be a flower in a vase. But it wasn't Porter's lackluster drafting skills that bummed him out. The game wasn't working. Typing out words on a phone was annoying, and the virtual keypad would pop up and cover half the screen. Players needed to be able to choose answers that

"Okay, but you'll have to leave as soon as my husband comes back from the bathroom."

were less open-ended. A successful cell phone game had to have, as Porter put it, "the right form"—a sleek, organic way of cramming everything into the screen space without confusing the player. Porter went to the best place for brainstorming—the streets of New York City. He walked around the block until it hit him: tiles. To help ground players, he would show scrambled letter tiles below the drawing to help them narrow the possible answers.

Keeping things simple was a mandate. Throughout the development, Porter kept trying to put himself in the mind of an elderly player. "If an 80-year-old person can figure it out, everyone can figure it out," he says. He knew that the best party games are inherently funny (e.g., beer pong or drunken charades). For *Draw Something* to get people talking, and laughing, he wanted players to try to draw things that were contemporary (say "Wu-Tang" or "*Hunger Games*") and open to interpretation ("wet" or "facial"). The game needed to appeal to both sexes as well, and the best way to do that was to make something that wasn't just fun but also flirty.

"I thought, This game has to be a way for boys in high school to flirt with girls in high school," he recalls, and he was dead serious. Porter felt that young people especially needed a more playful way to flirt than texting, which can feel loaded at times. A drawing game could be innocuous but sexy too. "It gives you something to talk about," he says.

The other question was: How could someone win the game? The answer came to Porter one afternoon when he was watching his son and a friend play catch in the park. At one point, Porter's wife told the kids she'd take them for ice cream if they reached 1,000 catches. "That's it!" he thought. Rather than compete against one another, *Draw Something* gamers could play cooperatively, working together to reach the longest possible streak of correct answers.

By February 2012, *Draw Something* was complete. To make a blockbuster video game like *Call of Duty*, a company can spend blockbuster-film-style money: $100 million easily, with a team of 150 people. A team of five made *Draw Something*.

There was just one problem—OMGPOP was going under. The company had burned through its $17 million in funding, and Porter was in the unenviable position of having to let good people go. "I felt terrible," he says. When the investors suggested he raise another round of funding, Porter declined.

"Look," he said, "we're in the business of making games. If we can't make games, then I don't want more money just for the sake of staying alive. I feel good about this game. Let's see what happens."

The investors eyed him from across the table. "This game is all or nothing for you," they said.

"I bet it all on this game in that sense," Porter says. "I was like, Holy shit, this might be the last game we ever make."

He began freaking out. What the fuck was he doing? He was gambling the future of his company. To keep from going nuts, he began waking up at six every morning to meditate and chill.

On an early February morning, Porter got up before sunrise, shut his eyes and visualized the best. Then he took the subway to the office and uploaded *Draw Something*.

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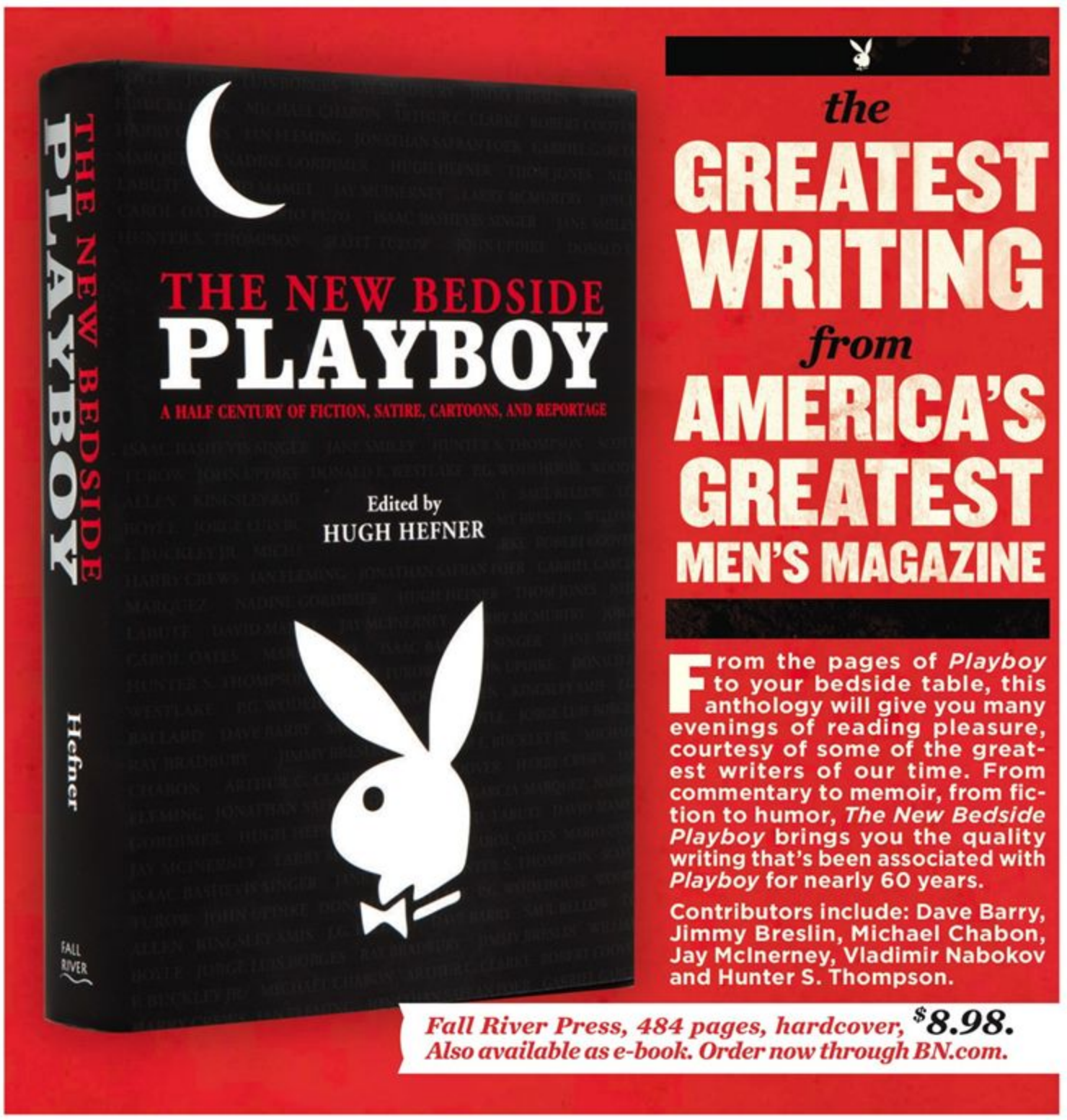
At the time, if you wanted to cash in on the mobile-game gold rush, you had to get the attention of Zynga. Founded by Mark Pincus and named for his late dog, Zynga has had a market cap as high as $9 billion. It was built on the success of social and mobile games such as *FarmVille*, *CityVille* and *Zynga Poker*. When I visited the company's San Francisco headquarters in April, it was like arriving at Willy Wonka's factory. Visitors walk through a neon light tunnel to get inside, where some of the 1,700 employees play Ping Pong and vintage arcade games.

There's a "Zyngabago" motor home parked inside and a full bar for Friday happy hour. Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing" is blasting throughout the café, and the lobby rises six stories, revealing the exposed-pipe ceiling. This is the house that video games built, and Zynga built it, in part, by acquiring game developers looking to cash in. One of the biggest scores was Newtoy, a small Texas-based start-up run by two brothers, David and Paul Bettner. The Bettner brothers scored big with their Scrabble-style phenomenon *Words With Friends*. Zynga purchased Newtoy in December 2010 for $53 million. David Bettner described joining the behemoth as "strapping a rocket booster on our back."

But with thousands of new games released online every month, how could a little gamer with a big dream get noticed by the big dog? Travis Boatman, senior vice president of mobile for Zynga, distills his strategy to three key words: *free, accessible* and *social*. "When you can play a game with everybody, that's a very broad game; that really resonates with our company," he says. And there was no game being played by everybody like this little drawing game from New York.

On the day of *Draw Something*'s release, Porter was watching the number of downloads. The game was being sold for 99 cents. There was also a free version that included ads. OMGPOP did almost nothing in the way of marketing or advertising. If a game doesn't crack the iTunes chart of the top 25 apps, it's almost like being invisible. Porter saw his game rising but not breaking the all-important barrier. "I kept thinking, Fuck, we're close!" Charles Forman, Porter's original partner, was watching too—considering the balance of his bank account since leaving the company had dropped to just $1,700.

Porter had a colleague create a little matrix window on his computer monitor that tracked the game's downloads and the number of illustrations being created by players in real time, almost like a stock ticker. The first time he checked it the ticker said there had been 1,000 downloads and 8,000 drawings created. Porter and his team tweaked



the game to improve its performance speed. By the end of the first day, they had 30,000 downloads. Each morning when Porter woke up in his Park Slope apartment to check the ticker, the numbers increased: 60,000; 90,000; 120,000 downloads. Ten days later, they passed 1 million. "It was weird as shit," Porter recalls. "I was like, Who are these people?" The game was soon earning hundreds of thousands of dollars each day.

Zynga was asking the same question. Porter had fortuitous timing. The Game Developers Conference, the annual gathering of all the major and independent game makers, was scheduled for March in San Francisco. Porter already had plans to go. Now he was rolling in as the big man, the whiz kid who was living the ultimate 2012 dream: developing a golden app. *Draw Something* ranked number one on both the free and the paid iTunes charts. As Porter walked the halls, other mobile-game developers began showing sour grapes.

"Oh yeah, that's not even a game!"

"I had a drawing game, but I just hadn't made it yet!"

"I was like, whatever, dude," Porter says. "You didn't fucking make it, so who cares?"

Porter went to the Zynga office to meet with the executives, including Mark Pincus. Porter was impressed by how much Pincus had clearly played the game and how he picked up on the important details. "I got the word *Tumblr* in the game," he told Porter. "I get it. It's relevant."

But sometimes your mind does funny things when you're faced with living out the ultimate dream, and Porter, despite being wooed by so many suitors, wasn't sure he wanted to take the pot of gold after all. One night he went to Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood for dinner and overheard a table of middle-aged women complaining about their jobs. Something inside him twisted. Why sell out if it meant leaving the job he loved? "I was like, Fuck, even when we're failing I have the best job," he says. "We're in SoHo making games. Most people think their job sucks."

But then Porter realized he could stay on as an executive and continue his work under a buyer, which is exactly what he and the investors decided to do. There was just one last thing to take care of—hiring back the people he had laid off. But Porter had to act fast and hire them back while their stock options were in place, though he couldn't tell them why. "Let's have coffee," Porter e-mailed the former employees. "I'm going to take you back," he told them at Le Pain Quotidien. "But you have to start this afternoon."

On March 21, just six weeks after *Draw Something* was released, Zynga announced its purchase of OMGPOP. "The OMGPOP team has created a game that's fun, expressive and engenders real social interaction," Pincus said. "*Draw Something* has captured the imagination of millions of people around the world." The plan was to use Zynga's power and resources to scale the game even higher and take over the world by localizing it for different countries, changing the language and cultural references of the game's clues.

In an even more perfect ending, Porter decided to share the wealth—spreading $30 million among his firm's 40-some employees, including those he had hired back. When asked why he did something so unusually generous, Porter shrugs.

"I don't know," he says. "It was the right thing to do."

•

Before I leave Porter's office, I challenge him to a quick round of *Draw Something*. I look down at my screen and see a black line rising up, then over and down. Then another black line up and over and down. Buildings, I wonder? Then I see what appears to be a large pancake circle at the top of one building, then another pancake on the other. But wait—they're not pancakes. They're two feet, connecting to two legs that rise beyond the screen. Beneath the buildings Porter has scrawled the word *Tokyo*. The answer, I realize, is Godzilla, and he's on top of the world.

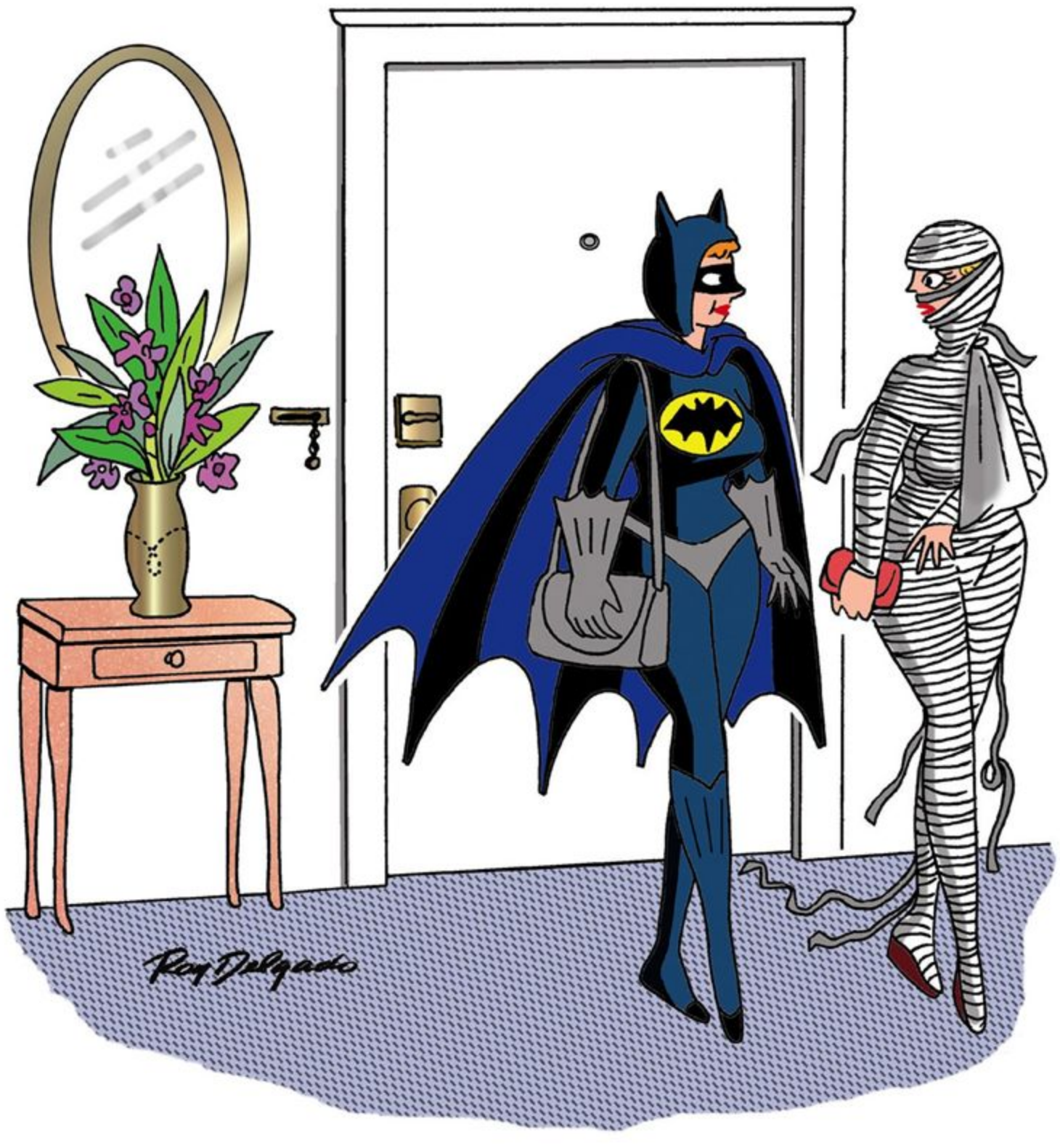
But as I leave his office, Porter walks me past the Omar and Prop Joe conference rooms, past the pile of Zynga pom-poms, and shows me a wide-screen monitor mounted across from an elevator. The monitor displays a feed of tweets about the company. "It gets you the pulse of things," he tells me. Just then, as though on cue, a tweet comes up: "*Draw Something* loses 5 million users a month after Zynga purchase?" When I ask Porter about that, he shrugs it off, attributing it to misinformation.

In the lightning-fast online world, the backlash comes even faster. In the wake of the Zynga purchase, game developers are crying hype and overvalue. As Cliff Bleszinski, designer of the blockbuster franchise *Gears of War,* says of the high purchase price of OMGPOP (and PopCap), "It's ironic that all those companies sound like a bubble bursting."

Indeed, in the weeks after our interviews end, a complicated series of events began to threaten the video game industry's newest behemoth. Suddenly Zynga's earnings began to fall, as did its stock price—down 10 percent, then 40 percent and 70 percent. *The Wall Street Journal* called Zynga's situation an "earnings disaster." Then, in early August, the company's chief operating officer, John Schappert, resigned. Meanwhile, the popularity of *Draw Something* quickly began to fade.

"People bring you up," Porter responds when asked about the decline. "And then they bring you down."

All of which begs the question: Who will fill the void? Which tiny start-up will be the next OMGPOP, the next Zynga, the next billion-dollar juggernaut? Chances are you'll find out soon—while playing some new game on your cell phone.



"Bad costume choice. By the time I got unwrapped, Dave's Viagra had worn off."

HAWKING

(continued from page 89)

PLAYBOY: You had a rather conventional childhood.

HAWKING: Yes. I went to a public school—what Americans call a private school—Saint Albans. I was never more than halfway up the class at school.

PLAYBOY: There's hope for us all. You really were just an average student?

HAWKING: [*Smiles*] When I was 12, one of my friends bet another friend a bag of sweets that I would never amount to anything. I don't know if the bet was ever settled and, if so, which way it was decided.

PLAYBOY: After Saint Albans, you went on to university to study physics.

HAWKING: Well, my father was a doctor and wanted me to study medicine at his old college, University College, Oxford. I wanted to study mathematics, more mathematics and physics. But my father thought there would not be any jobs in mathematics, apart from teaching. He therefore made me do chemistry, physics and only a small amount of mathematics. I duly went to University College in 1959 to do physics, which was the subject that interested me, since physics governs the laws of the universe.

PLAYBOY: Had you made up your mind early on about what you wanted to do?

HAWKING: Yes. From the age of 12 I had wanted to be a scientist. And cosmology seemed the most fundamental science.

PLAYBOY: In your last year at Oxford, you were diagnosed as having ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, which is supposed to be fatal within a very short time. It must have transformed you.

HAWKING: Yes. When you are faced with the possibility of an early death, it makes you realize that life is worth living and that there are lots of things you want to do.

PLAYBOY: According to newspaper interviews, and a recent *20/20* segment by Hugh Downs on ABC-TV, when you got your diagnosis, you went on a drinking binge for a few years.

HAWKING: It's a good story, but it's not true.

PLAYBOY: What did happen?

HAWKING: The realization that I had an incurable disease that was likely to kill me in a few years was a bit of a shock. Why should it happen to me? Why should I be cut off like this? But while I was in the hospital, I saw a boy die of leukemia in the bed opposite me. It was not a pretty sight. Clearly, there were people worse off than I. Whenever I feel inclined to be sorry for myself, I remember that boy.

PLAYBOY: And you didn't go off on the long binge, as reported?

HAWKING: I took to listening to Wagner, but the reports that I drank heavily are an exaggeration. The trouble is, once one article said it, others copied it, because it made a good story. Anything that has appeared in print so many times has to be true.

PLAYBOY: Still, it's astonishing that you had so mild a reaction [to your diagnosis]. Most people might have given up—or gone on that binge.

HAWKING: My dreams were disturbed for a while. Before my condition was diagnosed, I had been very bored with life. There had not seemed to be anything worth doing. But shortly after I came out of the hospital, I dreamed that I was going to be executed. I suddenly realized that if I were reprieved, there were a lot of worthwhile things I could do. Another dream I had several times was that I would sacrifice my life to save others. After all, if I were going to die anyway, it might do some good.

PLAYBOY: Doesn't this terrible disease make you angry?

HAWKING: Yes. I'm a normal human being with normal needs and emotions.

PLAYBOY: You got married and started a family shortly *after* you were diagnosed.

HAWKING: Yes, I got engaged to Jane Wilde, whom I had met just about the time my condition was diagnosed. That engagement changed my life. It gave me something to live for. But it also meant I had to get a job if we were to be married. Eventually, I applied for a research fellowship in theoretical physics at Caius College, Cambridge. And, to my great surprise, I got a fellowship and we were married a few months later.

PLAYBOY: How did your disease affect your lifestyle?

HAWKING: When we were married, Jane was still an undergraduate at Westfield College in London, so she had to go up to London during the week. This meant that we had to find a place that was central, where I could manage on my own, because by then, I could not walk far. After several years, we were given the ground-floor flat in this house, which is owned by the college. This suits me very well, because it has large rooms and wide doors. It is sufficiently central so that I can get to my university department, or the college, in my electric wheelchair. It is also nice for our children, because it is surrounded by garden, which is looked after by the college gardeners.

PLAYBOY: Wasn't it extremely difficult raising your three children?

HAWKING: Yes. Up to 1974, I was able to feed myself and get in and out of bed. Jane managed to help me, and to bring up two of our children, without outside help. But things were getting more difficult, so we took to having one of my research students live with us to help. In 1980, we changed to a system of community and private nurses, who would come in for an hour or two in the morning and the evening.

PLAYBOY: You have 24-hour nursing care now.

HAWKING: Yes. I caught pneumonia in 1985. I had to have a tracheotomy. After that, I had to have 24-hour nursing care.

PLAYBOY: Is it the operation that prevents you from speaking?

HAWKING: Yes. Before the operation, my speech was slurred, so that only a few people who knew me well could understand me. But at least I could communicate. I wrote scientific letters by dictating to a secretary, and I gave lectures through an interpreter, who repeated my words more clearly.

But after the operation, I could communicate only by spelling words out letter by letter, raising my eyebrows when someone pointed to the correct letter on a card. It is very difficult to carry on a conversation like that, let alone write a scientific paper.

PLAYBOY: And now you have the computer.

HAWKING: Walt Woltosz, a software expert in California, heard of my plight. He sent me a computer program he had written called Equalizer. This allowed me to select words from a series of menus on the screen by pressing a switch in my hand. When I have built up what I want to say, I can send it to a speech synthesizer.

PLAYBOY: Why did you choose theoretical physics for your research?

HAWKING: Because of my disease. I chose my field because I knew I had ALS. Cosmology, unlike many other disciplines, does not require lecturing. It was a fortunate choice, because it was one of the few areas in which my speech disability was not a serious handicap. I was also fortunate that when I started my research, in 1962, general relativity and cosmology were underdeveloped fields, with little competition, so my disease would not be a serious impediment. There were lots of exciting discoveries to be made, and not many people to make them. Nowadays, there is much more competition. [*smiles*]

PLAYBOY: Did you experience difficulty at the beginning?

HAWKING: I was not making much progress with my research, because I didn't have much mathematical background. But gradually, I began to understand what I was doing.

PLAYBOY: Let's see if *we* can understand some of it. To begin with, you use only one fundamental equation in your book *A Brief History of Time,* which forms the basis of your work. Can you define it for us?

HAWKING: The equation, $E=mc^2$, expressed the fact that energy and mass are really the same thing. *E* is for energy and *m* is for mass. The speed of light, *c,* is in the equation just to make the units the same on both sides. However, you can use units in which c equals one. This equation is important because it shows that matter can be transformed into energy and vice versa. In fact, it seems that in the early stages of the universe, all matter was made out of energy.

PLAYBOY: Energy that was then transformed to mass—or the solid bodies that make up the universe.

HAWKING: Yes. The energy was borrowed from the gravitational force of the universe, which had compressed everything to infinite density before it was released in the big bang. The total net energy of the universe is zero. Thus, the whole universe is for nothing. Who says there is no such thing as a free lunch? [*smiles*]

PLAYBOY: How does the total energy of the universe equal zero?

HAWKING: It takes energy to create matter. But the matter in the universe is attracting all other matter in the universe. This attraction gives the matter a negative energy that is exactly equal to the energy required to create the matter. Thus, the total energy of the universe is zero.

PLAYBOY: So once matter is created, the energy exists *in* the matter, which is spread out across the universe. Where did the energy that was needed for the big bang to occur come from?

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HAWKING: The energy needed to create the big bang came from the universe it created.

PLAYBOY: In the equation, time is also important. Why?

HAWKING: Before Einstein, time was thought of as completely separate from space. People believed that there was what was called absolute time. That is, each event could be given a unique value of time. However, experiments showed that this could not be the case. And Einstein showed that the experiments could be explained if one said that time was not separate from space but was combined with it in something called space-time.

PLAYBOY: According to Einstein, that means the time of an observed event in space is dependent on the position of the observer. So it becomes another measurement, like width and height.

HAWKING: Yes. Later, Einstein was able to show that gravity could be explained if space-time were not flat but curved. This idea of space-time has completely transformed the way we look at the universe.

PLAYBOY: A black hole is also critical to your theory. Could you explain?

HAWKING: A black hole is a region in which the gravitational field is so strong nothing can escape. Within a black hole, there will be a singularity, where space-time comes to an end. This singularity, an infinitely dense point of matter, is rather like the singularity that occurred in the big bang and is the beginning of space-time and the whole of the universe.

PLAYBOY: Why is it called a black hole?

HAWKING: The gravitational field of the singularity would be so strong that light itself could not escape from a region around it but would be dragged back by the gravitational field. The region from which it is not possible to escape is called a black hole. From 1970 to 1974, I worked mainly on black holes. In 1974, I made perhaps my most surprising discovery: Black holes are not completely black! When one takes small-scale behavior into account, particles and radiation *can* leak out of a black hole. The black hole emits radiation as if it were a hot body.

PLAYBOY: If your theories are correct, then a black hole will eventually explode in a way similar to how the universe began?

HAWKING: Yes.

PLAYBOY: Why does that happen?

HAWKING: Because of the uncertainty principle of quantum mechanics, particles and energy will slowly leak out of the black hole. This will make it grow smaller and smaller and leak energy more rapidly. Eventually, the black hole will disappear in a tremendous explosion.

PLAYBOY: Quantum mechanics is the study of the behavior of systems at small scales.

HAWKING: Yes. Atoms or elementary particles. In any case, a black hole cannot just suddenly pop out of nothing and explode, because there has to be something there to provide energy.

PLAYBOY: Even though you've made black holes a central part of your life's work, you concede that one has yet to be discovered. In fact, you mention in your book that you have a bet with a colleague that one will *not* be discovered. Is that true?

HAWKING: Yes. I had a wager with Kip Thorne at Caltech that Cygnus X-1 was not a black hole. It was an insurance policy, really. I had done a lot of work on black holes, and it all would have been wasted if it had turned out that they didn't exist. But then, at least I would have had the satisfaction of winning my bet. [*smiles*]

PLAYBOY: And?

HAWKING: Well, now I consider the evidence for black holes so good, thanks to Cygnus X-1, that I have conceded the bet. Cygnus X-1 is a system consisting of a normal star orbiting around an unseen companion. It seems that matter is being blown off the normal star and falling on the companion. As it falls toward the companion, it develops a spiral motion, like water running out of a bath. It will get very hot and will give off X-rays that are observed. We can show that the mass of the companion is at least six times that of the sun. That's too much to be a white dwarf or a neutron star, so it must be a black hole.

PLAYBOY: We feel privileged to hear the news. Can you go beyond deduction and establish what a black hole is, physically?

HAWKING: We want a volunteer who will jump into the black hole and find out what happens inside. Unfortunately, he won't be able to signal back to us to let us know.

PLAYBOY: Why?

HAWKING: Because of something called a light cone.

PLAYBOY: In your book, you say that in such an event, a person—or any object—would be torn apart by gravitational forces. And the intense gravity would prevent even radio signals from escaping.

HAWKING: Yes. A volunteer astronaut would have a sticky end at a singularity. His particles would survive, but that, I suppose, is small comfort. [*smiles*]

PLAYBOY: But isn't there a possibility that he or she might escape through what is called a wormhole?

HAWKING: Yes. Particles that fall into a black hole may pass through a thin tube, or wormhole, and come out somewhere else in the universe. But wormholes occur only in imaginary time. The history of the particles, and of an astronaut in real time, will come to a bad end at a singularity.

PLAYBOY: What is imaginary time?

HAWKING: Imaginary time is another direction of time, one that is at right angles to ordinary, real time. It seems that there will be large numbers of imaginary-time wormholes branching off, and joining on, everywhere. We do not notice them directly, but they affect everything we observe directly. It is an exciting area of research.

PLAYBOY: And you use imaginary time, and wormholes, to speculate about objects traveling through time, don't you?

HAWKING: [*Smiles*] Objects will pass through a thin tube, or wormhole, in imaginary time, and out into another universe, or another part of our universe. In ordinary time, one could pass through a black hole and come out of a white hole.

PLAYBOY: A white hole?

HAWKING: Yes. The laws of physics are symmetrical, and if there are objects called black holes, which things can fall into but not out of, there ought to be objects that

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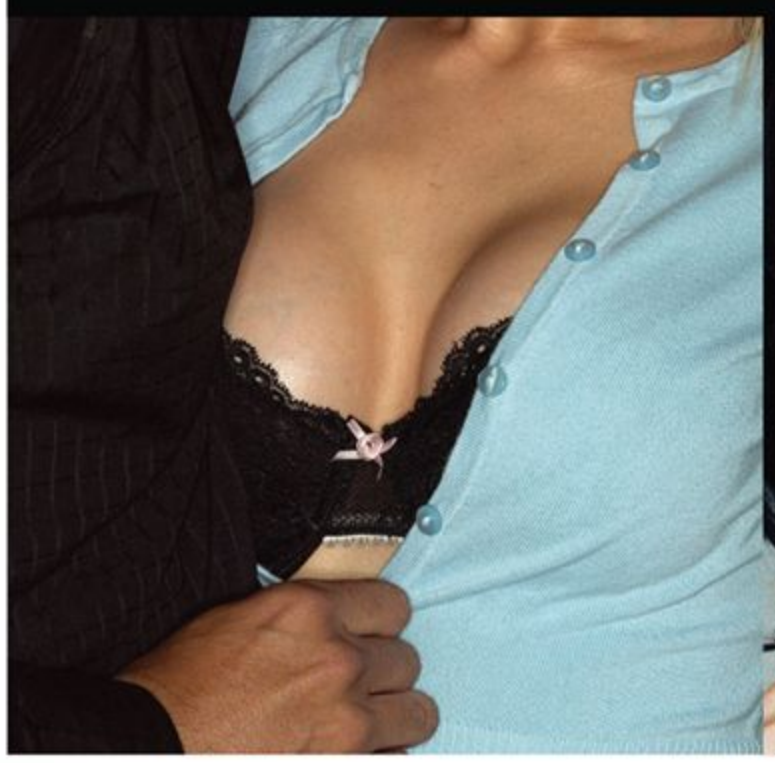

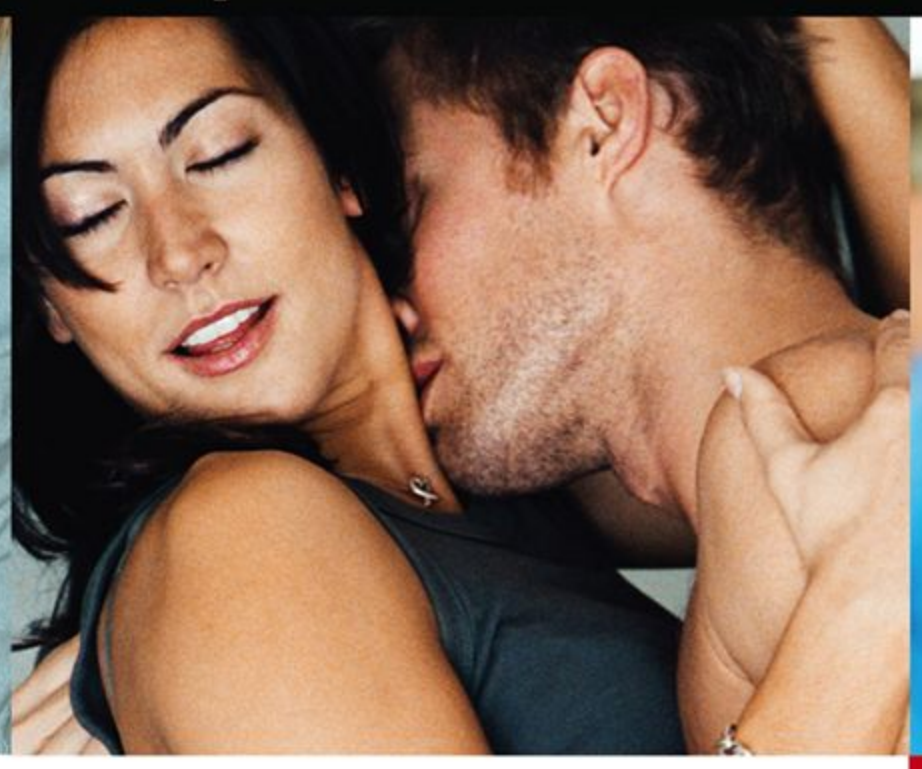

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things can fall out of but not into. One can call these white holes.

PLAYBOY: In ordinary time. But you said that was impossible.

HAWKING: A white hole is the time reverse of a black hole. The white hole may be in another universe, or another part of our universe. We could use this method for space travel. Otherwise, the distances are so vast it would take millions of years to go to the next galaxy and return. But if you could go through a black hole and out a white hole, you could be back in time for tea.

PLAYBOY: And if it were possible, in theory at least, you could travel back in time?

HAWKING: Yes. The trouble is, there would be nothing to stop you from getting back before you set out. [*smiles*]

PLAYBOY: Or you could get back and find yourself dead. Or your world dead.

HAWKING: Fortunately, for our survival, it seems that space-times in which one can travel back to the past are unstable. The least disturbance, such as a spaceship going through, will cause the passage between a black hole and white hole to pinch off. The history of the spaceship would come to an end, torn apart and crushed out of existence.

PLAYBOY: What, exactly, is the relation of imaginary time to real time?

HAWKING: By using imaginary numbers, one adds up all the probabilities for all the histories of particles with certain properties—such as passing through certain points at certain times. One then has to extrapolate the result back to real space-time, in which time is different depending on directions in space. This is not the most familiar approach to quantum theory, but it gives the same results as other methods.

PLAYBOY: Doesn't that randomness make it difficult—even chaotic—to apply to the laws of science?

HAWKING: Yes. Einstein objected strongly to this randomness with the famous statement that God does not play dice with the universe! But all evidence points to the proposition that God is, indeed, an inveterate gambler. [*smiles*] He throws the dice to determine the outcome of every observation.

PLAYBOY: As much—or as little—as we can understand of your work, it again strikes us that most of your ideas depend on obscure mathematical concepts, far removed from ordinary, observable life.

HAWKING: Imaginary time may sound like science fiction, but it is a well-defined mathematical concept.

PLAYBOY: Yes, to mathematicians and physicists, but to most of us, it's beyond immediate understanding.

HAWKING: Yes.

PLAYBOY: Then what can the general public gain from trying to understand these concepts? Most of us would say we had more immediate problems to deal with.

HAWKING: This is why I have spent some of my time attempting to explain what we do. I think knowledge of the general ideas of the recent discoveries in cosmology are useful to the public.

True, understanding cosmology will not help feed anyone. It won't even wash clothes any brighter. But man or woman does not live by bread alone. We all feel the need to come to terms with the universe in which we find ourselves, and to understand how we got here.

PLAYBOY: And that's why you wrote *A Brief History of Time*?

HAWKING: There are several reasons why I wrote the book. One was to pay my daughter's school fees. I didn't succeed in that, because by the time the book came out, she was in her last year of high school. But I still have to pay for her college.

PLAYBOY: That's an excellent reason. Are there others?

HAWKING: The main reason was that I had written several popular articles and given a number of popular lectures. They had been well received, and I had enjoyed doing them, but I wanted to try something bigger. I felt that we had made tremendous progress in the past 25 years in understanding the universe, and I wanted to share this with the general public. I think it is important that the public take some interest in science and have some general understanding of it.

Science has changed our lives a great deal and will change them even more in the future. If we are to decide in a democratic way what direction society should take, it is necessary that the public has some understanding of science.

PLAYBOY: Then you're doing something political—knowledge as the great leveler, not confined to a few who understand the language.

HAWKING: Yes. Knowledge and understanding of how the universe works, and of how it began, had become the preserve of a few specialists. But we all share the human condition, and we all want to know where we came from. My book is an attempt to share with the general public the knowledge that the specialists have found. Knowledge is not knowledge unless you share it with someone. Normally, specialists communicate only with other specialists; I feel they should communicate with the general public, as well.

PLAYBOY: You say that you may succeed in knowing how the universe began, but you will not know why. You do not—as Einstein did not—dismiss the notion of a supreme creator.

HAWKING: I think I'm careful in my book. I leave open the question of whether God exists and what his nature would be. One can never prove that God doesn't exist. What I did was show that it was not necessary to appeal to God to decide how the universe began, because that is determined by the laws of science. However, one could say that the laws of science were God's choice for how the universe behaves.

PLAYBOY: Apart from now being able to pay your daughter's college fees, has the book made any difference in your life?

HAWKING: It has not made that much difference. Even before the book, a certain number of people, mainly Americans [*smiles*], would come up to me in the street, but it has made that sort of encounter more frequent. And other things like interviews and public lectures have taken up the limited time I have to do research. However, I'm now cutting down on such things and getting back to research.

PLAYBOY: We assume that every scientist hopes for recognition for his efforts. You have received a number of honors but not yet the Nobel Prize. Do you think you may someday receive the Nobel?

HAWKING: Most of my work has been generally accepted. I have received a lot of recognition recently. But I don't know if I will ever get the Nobel Prize, because that is given only for theoretical work that has been confirmed by observation. It is very, very difficult to observe the things I have worked on. [*smiles*]

"Up on the table, Mildred. We're taking sex to the next level."

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LOT NO. 90984/60405

HFT

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SUPER COUPON!

One Stop GARDENS **3 PIECE DECORATIVE SOLAR LIGHT SET**

LOT NO. 95588/69462

Includes three AA NiCd rechargeable batteries (one for each fixture).

$9.99 SAVE 66%

Item 95588 shown

REG. PRICE $29.99

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SUPER COUPON!

SAVE 50%

CENTRALPNEUMATIC **17 PIECE AIR TOOL ACCESSORY KIT**

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57599754

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32 PIECE SAE/METRIC PITTSBURGH FULLY POLISHED COMBINATION WRENCH SET

SAVE 32%

LOT NO. 68854

$16.99 REG. PRICE $24.99

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SUPER COUPON!

SAVE 28%

Bunker Hill Security **36 LED SOLAR SECURITY LIGHT**

Item 98085 shown

LOT NO. 98085/ 69644/69890/ 60498

$17.99 REG. PRICE $24.99

Includes 1.2 volt, 600mAh/6 volt NiCd rechargeable battery pack.

52458682

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SUPER COUPON!

HFT **7 FT. 4" x 9 FT. 6" ALL PURPOSE WEATHER RESISTANT TARP**

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Item 877 shown

SAVE 60%

$2.79 REG. PRICE $6.99

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60" WORKBENCH WITH FOUR DRAWERS

WINDSOR DESIGN

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12" SLIDING COMPOUND MITER SAW WITH LASER GUIDE

CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

Laser guide requires two AAA batteries (included).

Item 98194 shown

LOT NO. 98194/69684

SAVE $80

SAW BLADE INCLUDED

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2.5 HP, 21 GALLON, 125 PSI VERTICAL AIR COMPRESSOR

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

LOT NO. 67847/69091

SAVE $70

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79203990

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DAX SHEPARD

(continued from page 90)

come Monday I would be tallying up all the different situations, and each one was progressively more dangerous. I got lucky in that I didn't go to jail.

Q7

PLAYBOY: Or worse.

SHEPARD: Oh God, yeah. My nose is completely sideways from a drunken altercation. I'm missing a knuckle because of a drunken altercation. Somehow I was usually able to get sober for work. I got sober for my first movie, *Without a Paddle,* but then I was fucked-up. I got sober for *Idiocracy,* but then I was fucked-up for three months. Then, right before I started *Zathura,* I knew I would get sober for that, so I went to Hawaii to relax, and that's when things went from bad to worse. I ended up in a car accident with a local on the way to get coke, which didn't stop us from going to get coke. Then it wasn't coke, it was crystal meth, but I did it anyway.

Q8

PLAYBOY: How exactly did you get a big Hollywood career?

SHEPARD: Well, I spent many, many years unemployed. I was 20 when I moved to Los Angeles. I went on probably 600 commercial auditions and couldn't book any of them. I went through the Groundlings. Everyone there had agents but me, and it was a ridiculously amazing group. I was there with Melissa McCarthy, who was nominated for an Oscar; Octavia Spencer, who won an Oscar; Tate Taylor, who directed *The Help.* Success is just a war of attrition. Sure, there's an element of talent you should probably possess, but if you stick around long enough, eventually something is going to happen, you know?

Q9

PLAYBOY: You first got people's attention as the pretend IRS agent who made Justin Timberlake cry on MTV's *Punk'd.* What was that like?

SHEPARD: Because J.T. was such a marquee name, MTV was nervous I would fuck up the bit and we'd have nothing to show for it. His garage was packed full of MTV brass telling me what to do. I wasn't nervous; it was pure adrenaline. What made *Punk'd* such a golden opportunity was that once the person arrived, I was directing the show. No one could yell "Cut" or tell me I was going too far. I don't think I would have popped on a format other than that. You know right out of the gate.

Q10

PLAYBOY: You studied anthropology at UCLA. What's your anthropological assessment of Ashton Kutcher's success?

SHEPARD: We are incredibly social animals, and we're constantly searching for some order of who's alpha, who's beta, who's zeta. Ashton's definitely an alpha. People want to dislike him because he's gorgeous and successful. It's fair to hate somebody like that. I relate. If he wasn't a crazy, driven, hard worker, I would find it all offensive. But he's like Tyler Perry. How do you not respect Tyler Perry? It's easy to make jokes about the guy, but he writes, directs and stars on a TV show, then writes, directs and stars in a movie all in one year. And certainly, once you get to actually know somebody, it demystifies them and everything they go through. When Ashton and Demi broke up, I felt bad. These are people I eat dinner with. Brad and Angelina, that's another story. I don't actually know them, so I'm as curious as the next person: Will they get married? What's their life like? And of course I would love to see them engaged in coitus.

Q11

PLAYBOY: You realize people have said that about you and every famous beautiful woman you've dated—Kristen, Kate Hudson, Ione Skye.

SHEPARD: I get that. People want to see us bang. But here's the funny thing about the response I've been aware of to my dating famous people: It's been very negative. I'm either not good-looking enough, not a good enough actor or not successful enough for these people. It's ironic, really. Guys should be excited that I got Kristen Bell. If Brad Pitt gets Kristen Bell, it's like, "Well, of course he did." With me, it should be, "Oh good, a normal-looking guy got her. Maybe I'll get me a Kristen Bell." But guys hate my guts for always dating women I have no right to be with.

Q12

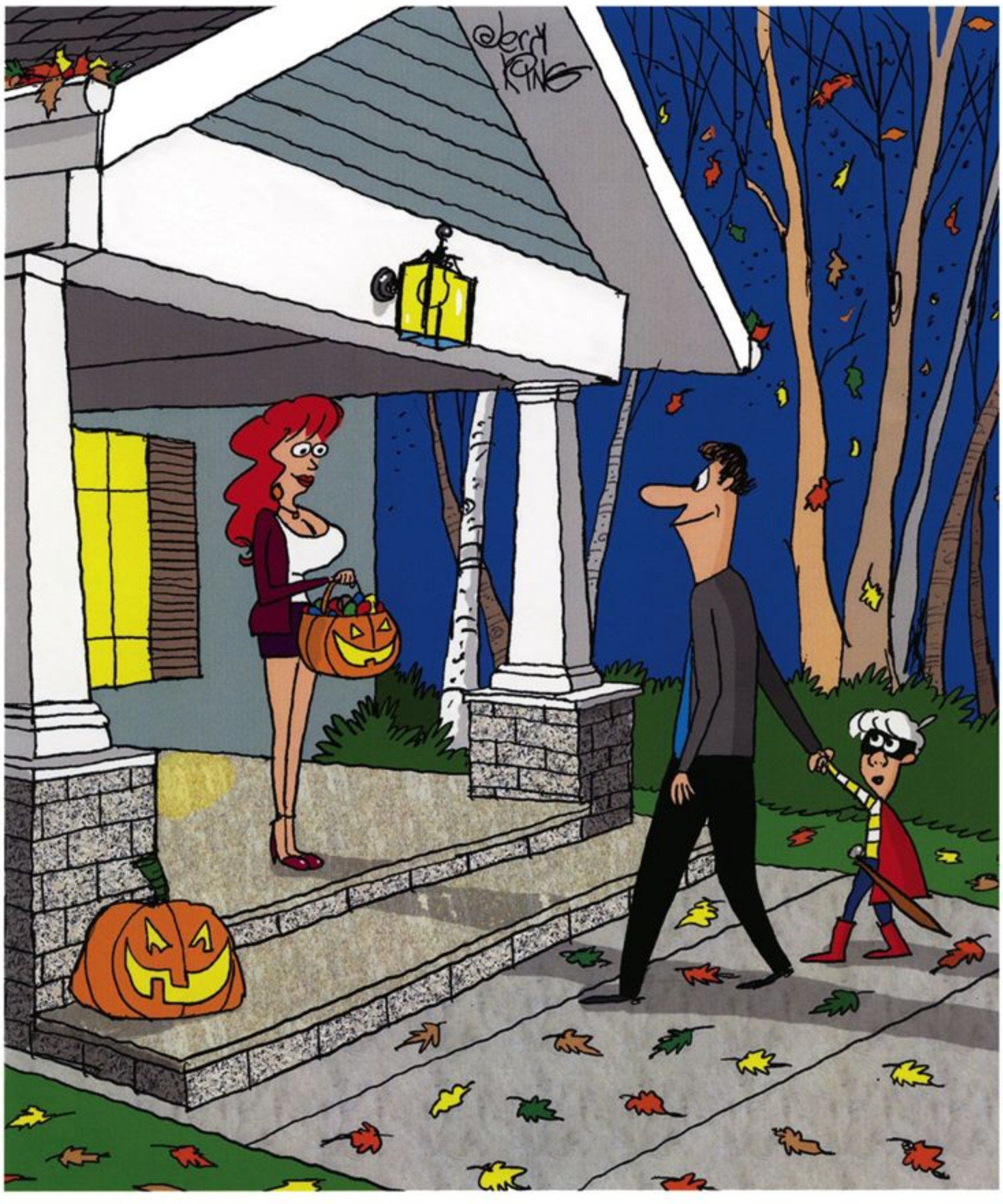
PLAYBOY: What's your secret?

SHEPARD: I attribute it to being funny and a good dancer. And I'm tall, which will get you places as well. I'm also wired for it. The times my brain works fastest are when I'm doing improv on a stage or meeting coeds in a bar.

Q13

PLAYBOY: You picked a career in which you're surrounded by gorgeous women. Does the urge to merge ever go away?

SHEPARD: No, it doesn't. I wish it did, magically. This is *(concluded on page 153)*



"Your memory must be failing, Dad. This is the fifth time we've visited this house."

PLAYMATE NEWS

MISS JUNE 1997

***CARRIE STEVENS* LAUNCHES**

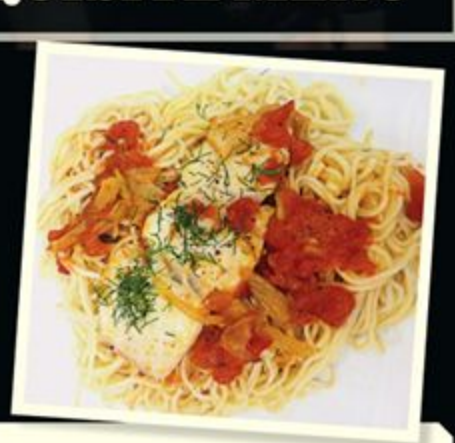
CENTERFOLD CHEFS

When you hire Centerfold Chefs to cater your next L.A.-area event, you'll also get a feast for your eyes. "Centerfold Chefs is reminiscent of the 1950s, when a man came home and was greeted by his smiling wife in kitten heels and lipstick," says founder Carrie Stevens. "Only the menu has changed." Carrie and some of her Playmate friends have chops in the kitchen, transforming local ingredients into culinary wonders. "Who doesn't love lavish meals and women who know how to throw a party?" asks Carrie.

A FEW HOT DISHES *AND A* TASTE *OF* THEIR EXQUISITE MENU

SHRIMP JAMBALAYA

SALMON EN PAPILLOTE

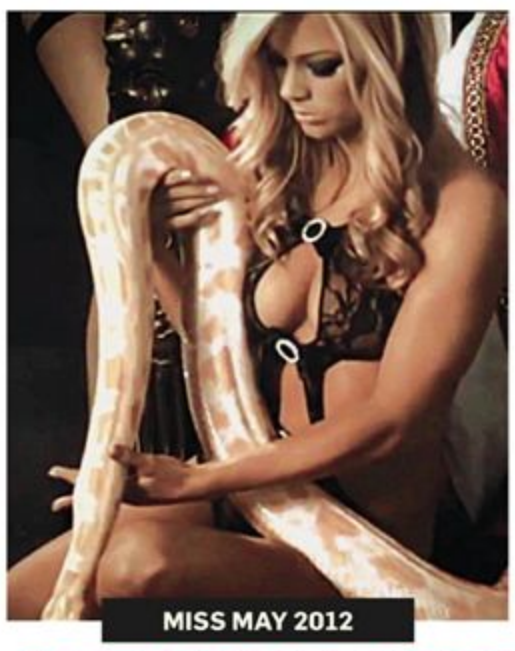


HALIBUT WITH FENNEL

PLAYMATE NEWS

PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR 2007

SARA JEAN UNDERWOOD proves Halloween is the sexiest holiday on the calendar, as evidenced above by our costumed Centerfold modeling for the Roma catalog.



MISS MAY 2012

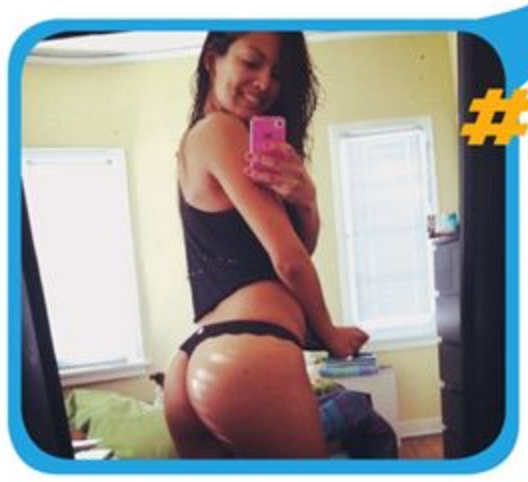
NIKKI LEIGH
appears in
BOB PRESSNER'S
rock-and-roll video
KING of NOTHING
which her sexy snake-handling abilities helped garner more than 5 million viewers in a week.

"I think *Hillbilly Handfishin'* is the most fun I've had getting dirty."

MISS JANUARY 2010
JAIME FAITH EDMONDSON

MISS NOVEMBER

1975 JANET LUPO launches a body oil line called FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH.



#twitpics

"Rearview Mirror" by the cheeky Miss April 2012 Raquel Pomplun

girlTALK

Miss June 2008 ***Juliette Fretté*** wed her dashing husband at Byington Vineyard and Winery in Los Gatos, California. The couple is living blissfully, and Juliette continues to write for the Huffington Post and Examiner.com.

Miss April 2010 ***Amy Leigh Andrews*** and PMOY 2012 ***Jaclyn Swedberg*** hung out at the Oris Watch event at Lily Bar & Lounge at the Bellagio in Las Vegas.

Miss September 1963 ***Victoria Valentino*** played Marlene Dietrich in *Dial "M" for Marlene,* which ran at the Flight Theatre in Hollywood.

Miss January 2001 ***Irina Voronina,*** Miss August 2000 ***Summer Altice*** and Miss September 2009 ***Kimberly Phillips*** attended the Melbourne, Australia Midsummer Night's Dream party.

*PLAYMATE FLASHBACK

Forty-five years ago this month Miss October 1967 ***Reagan Wilson*** brightened our doorway, later appearing on such shows as *Laugh-In, The Beverly Hillbillies* and *The Tonight Show.* Taken by her celestial body, NASA engineers hid a nude photo of Reagan on *Apollo 12* before its 1969 mission to the moon.

DAX SHEPARD

(continued from page 150)

overly deep, but I have to put women in the same category I put drugs and alcohol. It's an outside thing that I try to use to make my insides feel better, and I have learned that it just doesn't work. I have to keep my urges in check.

Q14

PLAYBOY: What's your relationship like with Craig T. Nelson, your TV dad on *Parenthood*?
SHEPARD: Craig T. Nelson is the closest person I've met to my identical twin, only we're separated by 30 years or whatever. He raced cars forever. We both have big noses, we're both tall, we're both goofy, we've both been around a lot of craziness. He's a guy I super-fan at work the way I super-fan Burt Reynolds, whom I got to work with on *Without a Paddle*.

Q15

PLAYBOY: Burt Reynolds?
SHEPARD: All the way. My house is a living shrine to Burt, much to K.B.'s chagrin. I have a urinal, and above it is a poster of *Gator* with a personal message that says, "To Dax, you're a hell of an actor but more important, a hell of a man. Love and respect." I would go to his trailer every day just to hound him for stories because I had so many unanswered questions. Like, Jackie Gleason was a very well-known and admitted functioning alcoholic, yet 80 percent of *Smokey and the Bandit* is him traveling at high speed. It's clearly him driving, and it begs the question: What were the safety protocols when Gleason was driving? Burt's answers were implausible. The physics of what he told me couldn't happen, but who gives a shit? They were great stories. I love that man.

Q16

PLAYBOY: Did you feel that way about John Travolta when you were in *Old Dogs*?
SHEPARD: Well, they say you shouldn't meet your heroes, and that's probably good advice unless you employ the strategy of hanging on to your daydream of who they are. *Urban Cowboy* is in my top five dramas of all time, so Travolta could have been lighting other cast members on fire and I would have just seen Bud climbing off the oil rig, or the guy from *Pulp Fiction*. I'm like those female fans who saw Elvis on his last tour. They didn't see the 300-pound beached whale on the stage; they were cheering and crying for the guy from 1956 swaying his hips.

Q17

PLAYBOY: Beau Bridges looks pretty good in your new movie, and he's no spring chicken. What was he like?
SHEPARD: When I saw his age was 70, I almost crapped myself. I would go, "Jesus, Beau, you're not supposed to be able to punch somebody out in a scene at 70. My grandpa couldn't have done that. What's your secret?" And he goes, "I've been a vegan for 12 years." I was like, Damn, I need to think about this. And then I saw *Forks Over Knives*, that documentary, and I was like, I'm in. I've been a vegan since January.

Q18

PLAYBOY: And how are you feeling?
SHEPARD: It's nothing like the pill in *The Matrix* but damn good, like 15 percent across the board in every respect. I sleep 15 percent better. My allergies are at least 15 percent better. I have fewer body aches. My skin looks better. I'm never starving, and I never need to ride the couch feeling completely full and disgusting.

Q19

PLAYBOY: So your vices are pretty much under control?
SHEPARD: I think I have a pretty good handle on my "isms," but it takes a long time. Each third or fourth bad thing you give up, you still have to hold on to one. I'm still on nicotine. I pound about a dozen of those Commit throat lozenges a day. I still drink gallons of coffee.

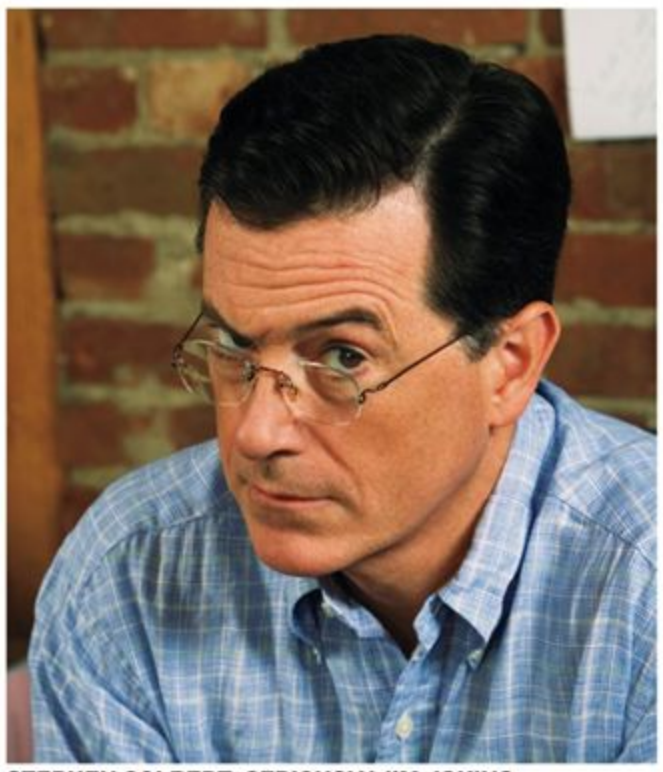
Q20

PLAYBOY: And you still drive like a maniac.
SHEPARD: I'm still super into driving too fast on motorcycles, yes. I have a Suzuki GSX-R1000 that's just for the racetrack, and I can get up to 190 on that. When you're going that fast, you're thinking only about what you're doing in the moment. It's the closest I could ever get to Deepak or God or something like that. You can't think about tomorrow or what happened yesterday. You just absolutely have to be thinking second to second to second about what you're doing in that moment. I don't think I could survive without doing something like that.

"I assume you're okay with my elbows on the table...."

ONE GREAT REASON TO RENT APARTMENT 24.

CASTRO: IMPERIALISTS CREATE REVOLUTIONARIES.



STEPHEN COLBERT: SERIOUSLY, I'M JOKING.

NEXT MONTH

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE THE NEXT BOND?

***B* IS FOR BEAUTY**—KRYSTEN RITTER ISN'T A BITCH, BUT SHE PLAYS ONE ON TV. THE STAR OF *DON'T TRUST THE B---- IN APARTMENT 23* DISHES IN *20Q* TO **TAFFY BRODESSER-AKNER** ABOUT REVENGE WITH ROACHES, GROWING UP ON A FARM IN SHICKSHINNY, PENNSYLVANIA AND HER FIRST BOYFRIEND, DAMIEN (OR "DEMON," ACCORDING TO MOM AND DAD).

THE ELEPHANT IN THE BEDROOM—IF MITT ROMNEY IS ELECTED PRESIDENT ON NOVEMBER 6 AND THE RELIGIOUS FANATICS WHO HAVE HIJACKED THE GOP GAIN POWER, WHAT WILL BECOME OF SEXUAL FREEDOM? **NANCY COHEN,** AUTHOR OF *DELIRIUM: THE POLITICS OF SEX IN AMERICA,* PAINTS A STARTLING PORTRAIT OF A NEUTERED NATION.

PLAYING DUMB—THERE ARE TWO STEPHEN COLBERTS—THE IGNORAMUS WHO HOSTS *THE COLBERT REPORT* AND THE THOUGHTFUL, HONEST AND FUNNY SATIRIST WHO SAT WITH **ERIC SPITZNAGEL** FOR THE *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW.* COLBERT EXPLAINS HIS PLANS TO START A CULT, HIS ADMIRATION FOR BILL O'REILLY, WHY FEAR WORKS AND THE $1.4 MILLION SUPER PAC HE STARTED AS A JOKE BUT NOW CONTROLS.

LOUD, PROUD AND TELEVISED—WHY IS EVERYONE SHOUTING? INSIDER **JOHN MERONEY** TRACES THE SLOW, STEADY DESCENT OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON TV FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF *CROSSFIRE* TO THE CURRENT LINEUP OF PROVOCATEURS ON FOX, CNN AND MSNBC. "TALKING HEADS USED TO BE BOOKENDS AROUND REAL JOURNALISM," HE WRITES. "NOW THE BOOKENDS HAVE REPLACED THE BOOKS."

WILD OATS—WHEN THE JUDGES WHO COST THE RESIDENTS OF STIRRUPSHIRE THE STEEPLECHASE TITLE BEGIN SHOWING UP DEAD, THE CONSTABLE AND A LOCAL NEWSMAN POSE SOME UNCOMFORTABLE QUESTIONS. SADDLE UP FOR NEW FICTION FROM CELEBRATED NOVELIST **RON CARLSON.**

BUNKER MENTALITY—NORTH KOREA IS NOT AN EASY COUNTRY TO GET INTO. BUT WE FOUND A LOOPHOLE—WE SENT **KEVIN COOK** TO PYONGYANG TO PLAY IN AN AMATEUR GOLF TOURNAMENT. TALK ABOUT TENSION ON THE GREEN.

MALE BONDING—TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST BOND FILM (*DR. NO,* STARRING SEAN CONNERY, WHICH PREMIERED ON OCTOBER 5, 1962), WE EXPLAIN HOW TO GET THE STYLE, THE GEAR, THE DRINKS, THE CARS AND THE WOMEN, IN WHATEVER ORDER YOU PREFER.

PLUS—COLD HARD STEEL WATCHES; THE LEGACY OF GOP OPERATIVE **LEE ATWATER;** A CLASSIC INTERVIEW WITH **FIDEL CASTRO;** HEF'S GIRLFRIENDS; MISS NOVEMBER AND MORE.

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